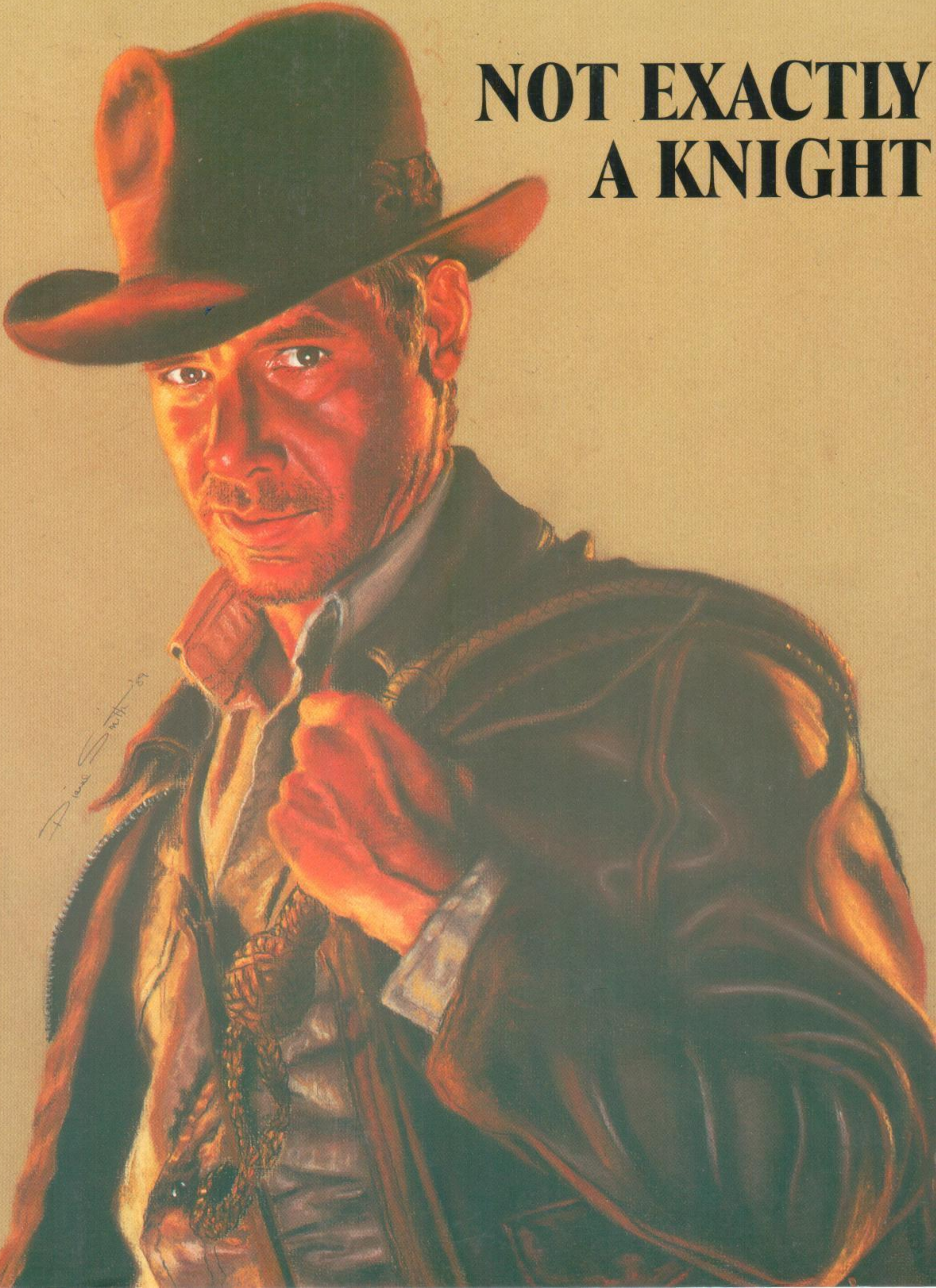
NOT EXACTLY A KNIGHT



For Becky, Mary, and Wanda--
three of the best friends
in all of explored space

For Roberta--
who started me on the journey

For Susan--
who is helping me continue

For Shortspokes--
who left this world in peace and gentleness
12 June, 1990
"I've got a lot of fond memories of that dog."

For friends present and absent--
especially Debbie

And most of all for my mother--
who taught me how to love
so I could learn to survive.
Thank you, Mom.
You were the wind beneath my wings.

Credit Where Credit Is Due Department

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Metaphysical Question of the Day: Is that another chicken joke?

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Q: What's black and brown and looks good on a lawyer?
A: A Doberman.

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Irene, what is this?

I'm not exactly sure, Dr. Jones. The woman who brought it by said it was called a fanzine--whatever that means.

I like the cover.

She said you probably would.

Dad on the back, too, huh? Well, that wasn't really necessary.

She mentioned something about "equal time" and "fairness doctrines." Then she added something about "genzines" and broadening her horizons.

Was she a student?

"Until the end of her days," as she put it.

Well, I might as well have a look at it. Do I have any appointments this afternoon, Irene?

Six.

Tell 'em I'm not in.

Editorial

I have to say that it's with mixed emotions I sit down to write the first--and hopefully not the last--editorial for **Not Exactly a Knight**. Though it does mean the work is done, it now means I have to (1) let go of the thing; and (2) let you see it. But then that's what it's all about, isn't it?

Conception. Gestation. Birth. These things do not leap full-armored from my forehead--and I'm grateful for that, because it sounds damn' painful.

NEAK came about as all such things do--a moment of weakness, a temporary loss of sanity--well, hey, they say you even forget about labor pains after a while, don't they? (Though my friends who have been pregnant assure me that this is not the case!) At any rate, some time after my first viewing of **Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade** at MWC two years ago, I was sitting around a table in then-Delphine's discussing the movie with some friends and well-known MediaWest junkies. Discussing? Well, actually we were pretty much floating around the ceiling. Harrison and Sean and Steven had all done it again, and it was bloody wonderful. And so out of my mouth came the fateful words: "Gee, I'd kinda like to do an Indiana Jones fanzine . . ." And Mary Urhausen says (Thanks, pal!): "Well, if you'll type it, I'll sell it."

And the rest is--or about to be--history.

Well, one of the first decisions--after my friends had decided not to call an ambulance for me--was the title. I went through a variety of things, some of which deserve (?) mention. There was the ever-popular "Oh, Henry!" soon to be followed with "Hanks a Lot." One I was personally very fond of--until I had some cover art, since it would have taken the whole cover--was "If Adventure Has a Name, it Must be Henry Jones, Junior." And then on one viewing of the film, the Grail Knight's words came through to me: "You're strangely dressed for a knight." And Indy's response: "I'm not exactly a--"

Well, you're no Boy Scout, either, Dr. Jones, but you **do** make a wonderful subject for a fanzine.

Thanks go out first to my contributors--the writers, who had enough faith to send things a new zine and especially the artists, who have not taken up a fund to lynch me after I requested them to get their art in far sooner than was necessary considering my eventual publication date. And if I am found floating face-down in the Holiday Inn swimming pool, don't blame them, because between this zine and the **Commode**, I'm sure I've made enemies as well as friends. But then there is my masthead statement to be considered--the one that comes right before "*Bleep* 'em if they can't take a joke"--"It's my zine and I'll do what I want to with it."

Leading to our next subject-- I've long had a desire to write about many of Jackson Hole's favorite son's roles, not just Han and Indy. So as I go to press, there are definite plans to make **NEAK** into a Harrison Ford genzine. To me, the phrase "not exactly a knight" applies to almost all of his characterizations--you know, like Sir Tommy of Lillard or Lord Rick Deckard--and so I figured, what the hell. And then I realized just how much the portrayal of Jones, Senior was abounding in this thing. So . . . Well, why not a Harrison Ford/Sean Connery genzine? Huh? Why not? If James Bond, Jimmy

Malone, and William T. O'Niel can't be considered modern-day knights, who can be? Besides, I've written some stuff I can't get published anywhere else, and . . . Well, you get the drift.

I am also being badgered (We don't need no stinking badgerers!) to add Scott Bakula's **Quantum Leap** character Sam Beckett to the lineup. As the song goes here now in south-western Illinois--"We don't need another fandom."

So, in your LOC's or otherwise--though not by burning things on my lawn, the neighbors wouldn't like it--let me know what you think.

I have recently acquired a **wonderful** cat--named Katya--who is a real delight, but incredibly curious and keeps trying to check out the printer while it's in operation. And if you find fur in your issue, you'll know who--or what--to blame

So here it is, gentle reader--the zine **quondam et futuris**.

Samia

BUSINESSES WE WOULD LIKE TO PATRONIZE:

Jones Leatherwork Shop--it's a real place--in Price, Utah. No wonder they moved there!

Henry Cleaners--"Same-day service--In by 11, out by 4"

Indy Tools--brings a whole new meaning to the term "craftsman," doesn't it?

A LICENSE WE WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN:

Indiana Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping License

Sarah

by

Rebecca S. Cope

Marcus Brody folded his arms around himself as tightly as he could and stamped his feet in a vain attempt to keep warm. Looking up at the second-story window, he saw that the light was still on and swore silently. Why didn't she hurry up? She knew damned good and well he was out here waiting in the cold. He withdrew his pocket watch for perhaps the dozenth time and checked it again. She was twenty minutes late. If she didn't hurry, her father would be home, and that would **certainly** be the end of things.

Marcus shuddered at the thought of Sarah's father. The indomitable Professor Reichausen was difficult enough to face in the classroom, let alone now, in his very own front yard. Reichausen was an extremely stern man, especially where his only daughter was concerned. He had made it quite clear to Marcus that the youngster's interest in his daughter was unwelcome and would not be tolerated. When the young, terrified Marcus had received that lecture, he had been more than willing to forget the winsome Sarah and look elsewhere for female companionship. But he had not figured on Sarah's own unwavering will.

That was why he waited now, in the shadow of the bushes beneath Sarah's window. As soon as she was ready, she would climb out of the window, down the trellis, and into Marcus' eager arms. He sighed. She was an imp, a faerie trickster, a beguiling witch, who could make him forget that he was only a poor student at the mercy of a faculty headed by Professor Reichausen. He would be expelled if he were caught here and sent home in disgrace. And all because of Sarah.

"Marcus!"

Marcus looked upward at the sound of the loud whisper. Sarah was leaning out of the window, her curly brown hair hidden by the woolen cap pulled snugly around her ivory-white face. She waved to him, and, without waiting for his return wave, turned and backed out of the window.

Marcus knew he should turn away. Whenever she climbed down the trellis, her skirt would billow out, and he would get tantalizing glimpses of lacy white knickers and stockinged legs. He sighed. He wished she would be a little more circumspect, but then again he knew deep inside that he was glad she wasn't.

Sarah continued her descent until her feet were nearly even with Marcus' head. She grinned down at him, at the same time letting go of the trellis. Marcus caught her in his arms and swung her to the ground with a heavy groan.

"Sarah, someday you're going to do that, and I'll miss!" he scolded her.

Sarah only laughed, brushing herself off after her climb down. "No, you won't. You never have yet." She took his hand and tried to lead him toward the street. Marcus pulled her back.

"Wait! What about your father? What if he sees us?"

"He's not home yet."

"But he's probably on his way. He could see us as he goes by and--"

Sarah laughed again. "All right, all right. We'll go through the backyard."

Marcus sighed in relief and followed Sarah into the shadows. Twenty minutes later, they were on the main street, headed toward the only place in Pennington, Connecticut that would be open after dark. They passed by the Nativity scene in front of the library, the holly-laden store windows, the park before the courthouse to Pennington's Drug Store, the local gathering place for the college students from Marshall.

As usual, the place was crowded. That it was a drug store at all was the town joke. Mr. Pennington, the grandson of the founding father of the town, was not stupid. He knew that most of his patronage came from his fountain business, and he had converted nearly three-quarters of his store into an area of tables and booths to accommodate the late-night carousing of the Marshall College students. What little merchandise he did sell sat on dusty shelves in one corner of the store. In the other corner sat an upright player piano kept busy by the students. It was a cheery, loud, and giddy atmosphere--enough to attract the students, but not enough to engender the wrath of the local citizens. Pennington's kept the students happy and out of trouble.

Marcus hustled Sarah inside in front of him and shut the door against the chill wind. The warmth felt good after the cold walk, and he and Sarah began peeling off their winter outer wear. He glanced at Sarah and noted how dazzling she looked with the bright red spots the wind had left on her cheeks. After hanging up their coats, Marcus looked around for an empty booth.

"There's nowhere to sit," Sarah said.

She was right. It was a Friday night, and everyone else had the same idea as they. Marcus scanned the crowd for a friendly face and found it in the form of one of his fraternity brothers. He didn't know the young man very well and had only seen him at one meeting and the class they had shared last semester. But that's what fraternities were all about. One was never friendless as long as another fraternity brother was present.

"Henry!" he called.

The young man in the booth looked up and smiled upon recognizing Marcus. He waved the couple over, moving from one side of the booth to the other with the girl who was already sitting there. He stood up again as the other two approached and clasped Marcus' hand warmly.

"Marcus Brody," the man greeted in a thick Scottish burr. He began a series of elaborate motions that were obviously some sort of secret fraternity greeting, and Marcus returned these in kind. The two young women glanced at each other in amusement.

"I'm so glad to see you. Do you mind if we join you? The place seems to be a little crowded."

Henry waved magnanimously to the empty seat. "Of course."

As everyone seated themselves, Marcus started the introductions. The young man's name was Henry Jones and his companion was Louise Grainger, whom Sarah belatedly recognized as one of her younger brother's friends. The two women exchanged greetings as Sarah cast a curious glance at Henry. Her brother was only fifteen. This girl could be no more than that herself. She could not help smiling, but out of the corner of her eye, she caught Henry's return smile, a lopsided, knowing grin. She cast her eyes quickly downward. He was a shameless rogue.

"Reichausen?" Henry was saying. "Are you by any chance related to the professor of the same name?"

"I'm his daughter."

Henry shot a look at Marcus, which Sarah could see was full of surprised respect. "Marcus Brody! I didn't know Professor Reichausen allowed any of the students to see his daughter."

Marcus opened his mouth to speak, but Sarah interrupted sharply. "Professor Reichausen has no say in whom his daughter sees."

Henry merely laughed. "I'm sure you think so, but I have the feeling that the professor thinks differently."

Marcus cleared his throat. "It's no secret that he is not fond of the concept, but, as you can see, Sarah has a mind of her own."

Henry leaned back in his seat and draped an easy arm over Louise's shoulders. "I admire a woman who can think for herself." He squeezed the girl's shoulder lightly, and Louise giggled in his embrace. Yet his eyes never left Sarah's.

Sarah bristled under his gaze. The cheeky foreigner! "I'm sure that where you come from, women are treated like chattel, but this is America, and the women here are not the possessions of men. Contratry to old world beliefs, women **can** and **do** think."

"I never meant to imply otherwise." Henry smiled ingratiatingly at her. "In Scotland, the men like to think they run things, but I recognized long ago that it was the lasses held the real power. We've never stood a chance."

Marcus nodded his head in agreement. "Women's suffrage has a long way to go, but eventually I think that all men will realize that it's foolish to deny women their due any longer."

Henry raised an amused eyebrow. "I am certainly one to give women their due." He flashed a wicked grin at Sarah. "Especially the pretty ones."

Sarah blushed, half in embarrassment and half in anger. This Mr. Jones was certainly a brash fellow. She fought the urge to duck her head and returned Henry's look levelly.

As the conversation meandered aimlessly, covering topics of little consequence such as classes, books, and mutual acquaintances, Sarah realized that as she was sizing up Henry, he was doing the same to her. She was a little nonplussed by this. She was used to the deference that most American boys afforded her, and this Scotsman's brazen ways admittedly intrigued her. She had had always realized that her status as Professor Reichausen's daughter had made her someone to be treated with extra respect, and it was a concept she was not prone to disagree with. She had come to accept it as her due. Yet here was a young man who seemed unmindful of her status, and, surprisingly, rather than being offended, Sarah found herself somewhat titillated.

She watched him closely as he talked. He was quite handsome, in a rugged, uncouth sort of way. He was dark-haired, with dark eyes that flashed beneath heavy brows. His mouth was beguiling, with expressiove lips that always seemed ready with a quick smile. But it was his overall bearing that intrigued her. He acted as if he knew a secret that he was ready to share with only those who lived up to his expectations. It was a cocky, impudent attitude. She knew that she should be repulsed by his boldness, but she found herself more and more attracted to him.

And she knew without a doubt that he was feeling the same about her. She wasn't exactly sure how she knew, but she felt it strongly, long before she felt the "accidental" brush of a knee or the slight pressure of his foot against hers.

Marcus checked his watch again, avoiding the look he knew Sarah was giving Henry. As the evening had worn on, it had become more and more obvious to him that something was happening between the two. And he knew that Louise had caught on to it, too. She was sitting there, ignoring the conversation, nursing the end of her soda disinterestedly, obviously waiting for the evening to come to a merciful end. Marcus sighed inwardly. He knew how she felt. He stole a glance at Sarah, and his heart sank. He may have been only

R. CAREY

a tender twenty years old, but he had seen that look before. And the recognition of it made him ache.

He looked at his fraternity brother bitterly. He should have known better than to introduce Sarah to this slick bastard. He should have known that he could not compete with Henry's dark good looks or his worldly attitude that women seemed to find so attractive. Marcus considered his own appearance disparagingly. He was not ugly by any means. But he was short and boyish-looking with still a trace of acne left from his teenage years. He had led a sheltered life, born in London, and moving to America almost three years ago with his minister father. He knew little about Henry Jones's background, but was aware that the young man had come to America on his own, at the tender age of fifteen and had worked hard to win a scholarship to Marshall. It was almost unheard of that one so poor should be attending a school of such privilege as Marshall. Yet the determined Mr. Jones had accomplished it. Just one more reason to make Marcus resent him.

He glanced again at Sarah as she gazed at Henry with rapt attention and knew with certainty that he would not be seeing Sarah home tonight. Or, for that matter, any other night. He wasn't quite sure when during the evening it had happened, but he knew that she was in love. And it wasn't with him.

He looked at his watch again. "I'm sorry to interrupt, but it **is** getting quite late, and I have a great deal of studying to do tomorrow."

Sarah and Henry broke off their conversation to look at him blankly.

"So soon?" Sarah complained, her eyes wide with innocence.

Marcus stood up. "I really **do** have to be going. Sarah?" He held out his hand to her, knowing exactly what her response would be.

"But I'm not ready to go home! The night's still young. Isn't it, Henry?"

Henry nodded in agreement. "If you really have to go, old chap, I'll see to it that Miss Reichausen gets home safely. If that's all right with you?"

It certainly wasn't all right with him, Marcus thought, but only said, "Thank you, Henry. I would appreciate that."

Louise grabbed her clutch bag and hastened to stand up. "Henry, would you think me bold if I asked Mr. Brody to take me home? It **is** awfully late, and I think I should be going."

Henry looked at Marcus imploringly. "Would you be so kind?"

Marcus nodded politely. "Of course." He held out his arm to the young lady and smiled thinly at the remaining two in the booth. "I wish you both a good evening. Sarah. Henry." He led Louise to the door and helped her with her coat. He could tell that she was grateful for his rescue. He looked at her for the first time. She was a comely little thing, but she looked so young. He wondered how old she was. Sixteen, seventeen?

As he opened the door to the icy chill of the December night, he glanced back at the table for the last time. They both sat there oblivious to everything around them, engrossed in each other entirely. Marcus sighed heavily as he closed the door behind him.

Sarah knew that she should stop. She groaned in pleasure under the pressure of Henry's hand on her breast. She knew with all the depth of her being that what was happening was wrong and that she should stop. But she also knew that she would not. She returned his feverish kisses with a passion to match his own.

What was happening to he? Why had all of her normal common sense left her so completely? She had been touched by other boys, and she had rebuked them all. Why couldn't she say no to Henry?

They had only been seeing each other for a month now. Of course, it was behind her father's back. She had known instinctively that if he would object to Marcus Brody, he would be livid about Henry Jones. She had arranged to meet Henry clandestinely as often as she could. The rest of the time, she found herself totally obsessed with thoughts about him, surprisingly lurid thoughts that she had never before experienced. When they were apart, she longed only to be with him again. And when they were together, she realized only how short their time with one another was.

They had spent a splendid month, stealing what little time they could away from the wrathful eye of her father. They had gone ice skating, dancing, and to the arcade to see the nickelodeons. They had taken long walks in the cold night air, holding on to each other more from desire than from any wish to keep warm.

And they had talked. Henry was everything she had imagined that she had wanted in a man. She was enthralled by his exotic Scottish accent and his tales of traveling to America alone. She admired his strength and resolve in getting exactly what he wanted. He had set goals for himself and had resolutely gone about obtaining them, no matter how impossible they seemed. She sensed a dangerous masculinity within him that made her heart race. He was so different from the other young men she knew. They were just children, but this was a man, even though he was only twenty-one.

He talked of his interest in medieval history and his desire to pursue it as a career. He wanted to research the entire history of the Crusades and put in to perspective the reasons that such brave men gave up their lives for religious ideals. She listened to him expound on his ideas and admired him for his zeal. She wasn't sure she understood all of his theories, but she listened as he spoke in impassioned tones of men and battles that had all existed hundreds of years before she was born. She had never been much interested in school or history before, but her love for Henry brought it all into focus for her. She listened in rapt silence to the same tales that had bored her to tears in history class. If this was what Henry loved, then she, too, loved it. She was, after all, merely a part of Henry, as he was a part of her. It had seemed only natural to allow him to touch her in such intimate ways.

She drifted away from her current situation a little. They were lying together on top of a blanket spread out over the hay that covered the floor of the loft. Sarah had prevailed upon a friend to allow she and Henry to use the barn to be alone together for a while. It was very cold, but they had draped an extra blanket over themselves. At least they could exchange kisses without the cold wind carrying their breaths away. She couldn't remember when their kisses had turned into the gradual exploring of each other's bodies, but it had, and she wasn't sorry.

She recalled vividly the electric touch of her hand on the front of his trousers and the discovery of the hardness there. She had shivered at the feel of his hands on her breasts and the pressure against her as he had lain on top of her, grinding himself gently into her, igniting fires she never knew existed, despite the layers of clothing that separated them. She had trembled with an ecstasy that she was sure could not be surpassed as she felt his hand travel beneath her skirt and up her leg to the secret place between her legs. She moaned as his fingers massaged her there through the cotton fabric, building up a friction that left her breathless.

Gradually, the layers of clothing had been removed, until now they lay together in a splendid nakedness. He was on top of her, showering her face, throat, and chest with kisses. He was breathing heavily into her ear, whispering her name with a hoarseness that made her catch her own breath. She realized in that moment that she owned him. She liked the feeling. She also realized in her body was the release that his own body craved, and she revelled in the power that it gave her. She was still unable to resist his touches, but she knew that he was just as helpless, caught up in a desire for her that inflamed both of them beyond reason.

When she felt the nudge of his leg between hers, she willingly spread her own legs wide, wrapping her arms around his broad shoulders. She felt him shudder above her and pull himself up away from her. He braced himself on his hands and gazed down at her with a deep frown. He was panting heavily as he struggled within himself for words.

"Sarah, I want you," he choked out. She could see the desire in his eyes; he didn't need to voice it. She could almost feel her heart burst open at that point as she felt a rush of love for him. She knew that he waited for her permission. She nearly laughed aloud at the absurdness of the situation. How could he think he needed her permission when her whole soul cried out for him? She smiled.

"I love you, Henry."

He blinked at her, maybe because of the sweat that ran down his forehead, or maybe it was because of her statement. He remained motionless for a long moment, poised above her. His dark eyes stared into hers, the intensity of the stare puzzling her. Then, in a voice so soft she almost could not hear him:

"Sarah, my love, let me take you now. Let me love you."

"Yes."

There was another pause. Then, in a strong, clear voice, he said, "I love you."

Later, when she thought back on that night, she remembered that she felt pain as he first entered her. It had frightened her somewhat at first to feel her own body fight so hard to reject something she wanted so badly. Yet, she had clenched her teeth and allowed him to continue his penetration. And, gradually, the tightness disappeared, and all that was left was the wonderful feeling of Henry inside her, moving steadily in and out, stroking her own softness with his hardness. So this was the dreaded thing called sex. She could have laughed. Her mother had certainly lied to her about this. She had told her daughter in no uncertain terms that sex was enjoyable only for the man, and that it was a woman's duty to endure it for the sake of begetting children.

Oh, Mother, how could you have been so wrong? She could feel the excitement within her body center itself around Henry. She felt the urgency build within her, a feeling that welled in intensity as Henry continued his smooth strokes. Just as she felt she could not bear the ecstasy any longer, waves of pleasure broke over her, causing her to quiver in sheer and absolute delight. She let out a strangled moan of joy which was muffled against his hairy chest.

As she struggled to regain her breath, she felt Henry stiffen against her and heard his own moan against her hair. She clutched him tightly to her, stroking his hair, squeezing his shoulders, until gradually he fell limp in her arms.

She remembered that night forever. It was, she became convinced, the most important moment of her life. She remembered how they both had lain there, spent, clutched in each other's arms as if afraid to let go.

"I love you," Henry whispered gently into her ear.

She smiled at the words and knew with a certainty that they were true. This was not to be a one-time act. It was to be repeated, she knew, as many times as they could find possible. It was meant to be because it was so very right.

Marcus tossed his stack of books down on the table with an exaggerated sigh. The students around him looked up in irritation, but he didn't care. He hated geology. He hated doing research in it. And he hated being in the school library on a Friday evening.

As he sat down and opened the top book, he reflected that it didn't really make any difference what day of the week it was. Since that day he had introduced Sarah to Henry, he had not spent one evening with any girl. It wasn't that he couldn't have found a young lady if he had tried, it was just that it was proving harder than he thought to get the lovely Sarah out of his mind.

He'd seen the two of them several times in the four months that had elapsed since then. They always seemed to be together, holding hands, whispering into each other's ears, casting knowing glances back and forth. It had taken a long time to come to terms with the jealousy he had felt, but in the long run he had come to understand that Sarah was truly in love with Henry and, strangely enough, Marcus was convinced that Henry returned the feeling.

At first, Marcus had tried to dissuade Sarah from what he was sure was just a silly infatuation. He really didn't know Henry Jones very well, but he had heard rumors and what he had heard did not sit well with him. It seemed that the young Scotsman thought nothing of dalliances with fast women and was widely known among his fraternity brothers as a young man of considerable sexual experience.

While Marcus was more than convinced of Sarah's ability to fight off any unwelcome advances, the nagging feeling that Henry's advances might not be unwelcome kept a constant knot of worry in his stomach. He had tried to approach Henry on the subject, but it had come off badly, with Henry merely laughing at Marcus' naivete and assuring him that "gentlemen do not take advantage of innocent women." That had relieved Marcus' mind for a while--until he realized that Henry had neither confirmed nor denied being a "gentleman."

When he had tried to talk to Sarah, it was even worse. He found that he could not bring himself to raise the delicate subject of sex and ended up talking lamely about commitment and marriage, topics which Sarah immediately laughed off, teasing him about acting like her father.

But then as the weeks passed and Marcus was forced to bear witness to the young couple's growing love affair, he had to admit that they certainly were devoted to each other. He heard through his fraternity brothers that Henry Jones had forsaken all his other women for the monogamous relationship with Sarah. And he had heard through the school grapevine that Sarah had told her father that she was in love, but had not revealed the man's name to him. That Professor Reichausen was on the warpath was an understatement. He stalked the halls of Marshall with wrath in his eyes, staring down the young men he suspected of stealing Sarah's attentions. He had even had a confrontation with Marcus, demanding to know if he were the man to whom Sarah had lost her heart. Marcus had honestly denied being the object of her affection. When pressed by the professor for the name of the boy who was, Marcus, not without much terror, denied all knowledge. Evidently, he could lie better than he thought. Professor Reichausen had left him alone after that.

Sighing, Marcus buried himself in his research paper. Sarah was a problem that would not go away, but he could ignore her in his work.

It was barely an hour later that Marcus became aware of the presence behind him. He twisted in his seat to see Henry standing there, reading over his shoulder.

"Henry! You startled me."

"Sorry. Just seeing what you were up to."

Marcus shifted in his seat and tried to look around Henry. "Where's Sarah?"

"She's not feeling very well. She decided to retire early." He pulled up a chair next to Marcus and pretended to keep reading the open page. "Essay?"

"Research paper."

Henry grunted in response, casually pushing the book away from him. "I was never really interested in geology. Rather boring."

Marcus smiled. "I can sympathize with that. But it **is** required for graduation."

"Yes. Stupid." Henry was looking down at the table, running his finger along a carved letter in the top.

Marcus frowned and leaned back in his chair. He had never seen Henry look quite so preoccupied. He felt uncomfortable as he watched Henry gather himself to speak.

"I've been looking for you."

"Why?"

Henry still did not look at him. "I--I don't have many friends. I've spent nearly all my time working to get through school. Being on scholarship isn't easy. They expect a great deal."

"But you have a very high average."

"That's because I work my blessed ass off! I usually get up at three every morning and study until it's time to go to classes."

Marcus raised an eyebrow. He hadn't known that. He had always assumed that it came easy for the Scotsman. The realization helped to humanize Henry for some reason and soften Marcus' attitude toward him. Marcus could tell that Henry needed someone to talk to, and he sat back in his chair, waiting for the other young man to make the first overture.

"Marcus, I can see that you're busy, but I was wondering . . ." He cleared his throat. "Well, I . . ."

"Is it that hard to ask a favor of a friend?"

Henry looked up, startled. He gazed at Marcus for a moment, his eyes holding a tense frown. Gradually, the frown gave way to an imploring look. "Am I your friend?"

Marcus pondered that. This man had stolen Sarah's heart away from him. No, correct that. He had never had Sarah's heart for anyone to steal. Henry was not his enemy. He had not hurt Marcus on purpose. What had occurred between Sarah and Henry had nothing to do with what friendship could develop between these two men.

"Yes, I'd like to think so."

Henry smiled. "Thank you, Marcus. I appreciate that."

"Well, what is it that I can do for you?"

"I simply need someone to talk to. As I said, I don't have many friends, and this problem is so major I needed to speak to someone about it."

"Here I am." Marcus smiled at him, feeling suddenly good that he could be available for his new-found friend.

Henry gazed at him a moment. "I hardly know where to begin. It's about Sarah."

What good feeling Marcus had been experiencing vanished instantly. "Sarah?"

"She's pregnant."

Marcus sat there in a daze for a moment, feeling as if someone had hit him in the stomach. "She's with child?"

Henry chuckled mirthlessly. "With child? So that's how the upper-class puts it. Yes, Marcus, she's with child."

Marcus forced himself to calm down and think about what Henry had just told him. He did not even have to ask if Henry were the father of the child. That was more than obvious. That they had engaged in sexual relations at all was what Marcus found hard to take. How could Sarah submit to this man without the benefit of marriage? It was against all that was right and moral.

"Are you sure?"

Henry shrugged. "Sarah is. And I can tell her breasts are swollen."

Marcus blanched. "Has she told her parents?"

Henry raised one eyebrow. "Are you joking? Her father would kill her and then me. No, she hasn't told anyone except me."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know."

Marcus bristled. "You must do the honorable thing and marry her, Henry."

Henry looked at him as if he were crazy. "Of course I'm going to marry her. What kind of man do you take me for? That's not the problem. Sarah and I had been talking about getting married long before this. No, the problem is how to go about it. She's terrified of telling her father that she's pregnant." He paused and corrected himself with a smile. "With child." Yet she's certain that he would not permit the wedding if she doesn't tell him."

"Why not?'

"Me. That's why not. I'm evidently not his ideal of the perfect son-in-law--poor, no connections, and a foreigner to boot. He's already decided that she should marry the son of one of his friends. He told her about it just last week. Sarah threw a fit. Stormed about the house, locked herself in her room. But she said it did no good because her father told her this morning that he has arranged for a dinner where she can get acquainted with her 'future husband.'" Henry said the last phrase with disdain.

"She can't marry anyone under such false pretenses. This poor fellow must be told that she's--er--pregnant."

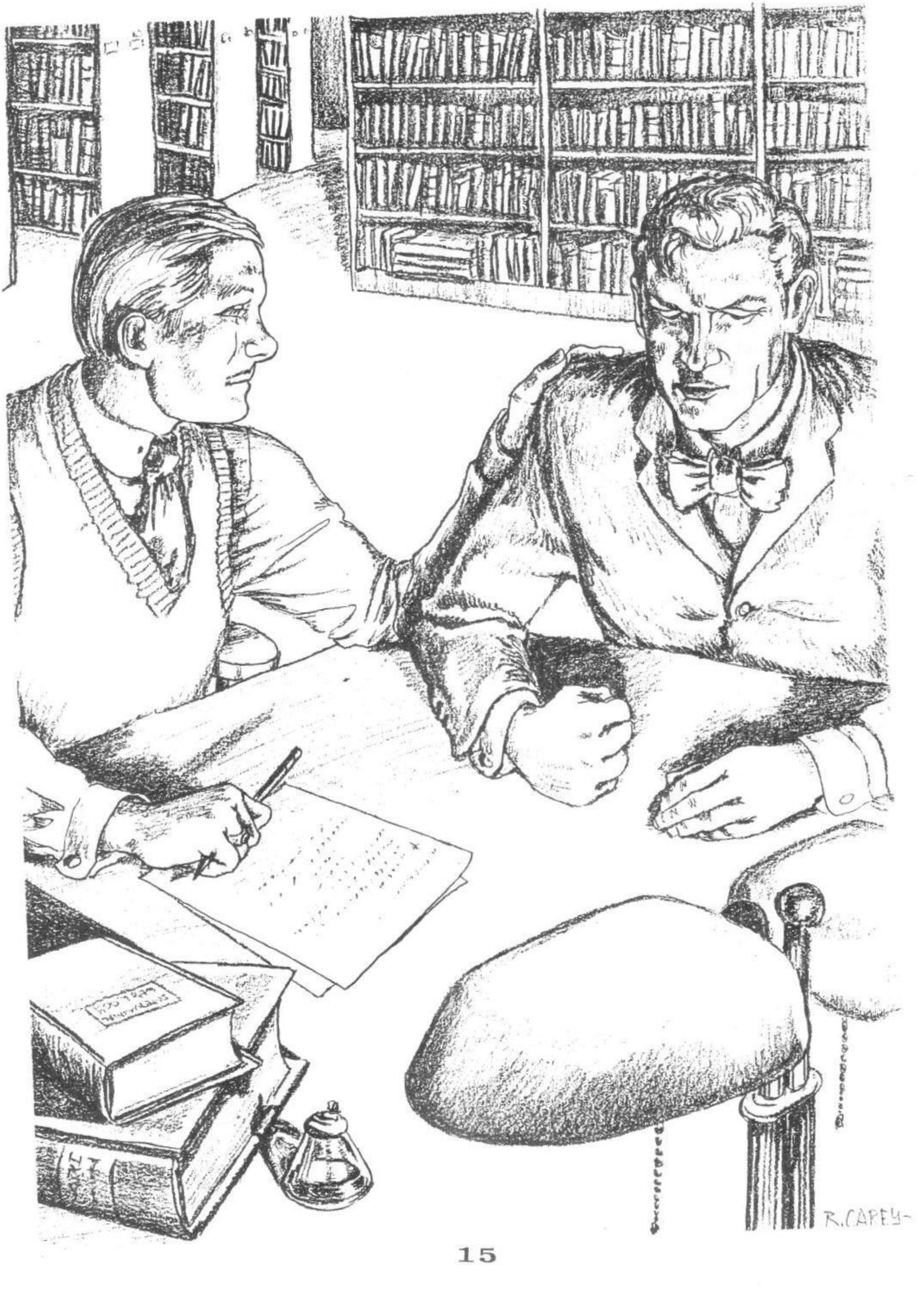
Henry shook his head. "That's not necessary. It'll never get that far. I'll take her off with me, and we'll elope if we have to. But the only man who will ever be her husband is me. And that you can count on!"

Marcus knew in that moment that it was true. Sarah and Henry would be married. The baby would be a bit "premature," but Marcus realized that it was only a formality. Sarah and Henry loved each other, and they would be together.

"But elopement presents its own problems," Henry continued. "I'm a very poor man, Marcus. I have nothing to offer Sarah. There her father is absolutely right. If we run off, I'll have to leave the college and get a proper job. But without a complete education, I'll be forced to take whatever work I can find. I know I'll eventually be able to do well, but I won't be able to teach. That was what I really wanted to do. And there will never be any opportunity to finish my degree." Henry was gazing past Marcus, his eyes focused on nothing, a slight crease of a frown on his forehead. "But that's not important. What concerns me more is how I'm going to be able to support a wife and child on a laborer's pay. Oh, I know it can be done. Men do it all the time. But Sarah is used to finer things. I want to be able to give her that."

"You do have a quandary," Marcus agreed.

Henry sighed, looking dejectedly at the surface of the table. "Not really. It's all preordained. We really have no choice but to face up to what we've done and tell her parents. I couldn't really run off with her. It wouldn't be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fairto either of us. And we're going to need some help when the baby's born." He smiled grimly at Marcus. "The minute we made love, it was predetermined." He suddenly, and with a force that shocked Marcus into jumping in his seat, slammed his fist down on the table. "If only I'd had the resolution to keep my hands off her! Damn it! She's a lady. She doesn't deserve to be in this mess. I feel as if I've ruined her, as if I . . . raped her. I feel so vile."

Marcus stared at him in surprise. It had not occurred to him during the entire conversation that Henry could have felt such guilt. For a moment, he tried to put himself in Henry's position, a hard feat, considering his own virginity. But he could understand that the two of them had submitted to the passion of the moment. That they had allowed themselves to be in that position at all was the gravest error of judgment, but they had, and the rest had just followed the course of nature. He had heard his father preach enough warnings against just such lust many times before, and he now understood with a clarity that he never had previously what his father had meant. Henry wasn't evil, just human. Sarah wasn't weak, just human. Human frailty meant sin, Marcus knew, and now these two would pay the price. No, he corrected himself: these three. There was an unborn child to consider.

Marcus reached out and laid a comforting hand on Henry's shoulder. "You're only human, Henry. You must forgive yourself. God forgives you."

Henry looked at him doubtfully. "Fine talk for a minister's son. I have committed the sin of fornication. I always thought God found that especially wicked."

Marcus smiled gently. "There is no sin that cannot be forgiven."

Henry snorted derisively. "And just which God have you been praying to?"

"The same one as you."

Henry's eyes flashed with anger. "Not me. God washed his hands of me long ago."

Marcus frowned in concern. "Henry, how can you say that?"

"Because it's true. The dominie told me so."

Marcus looked at him, shocked. "What are you talking about?"

Henry shook his head reluctantly. "It's a long story. You'd be bored."

"No, I wouldn't," Marcus replied earnestly.

Henry gazed at him uncertainly, then relented. "You already think I'm a cad so there's no point in keeping this from you." He sat back in his seat, picked up Marcus' pencil, and began to play with it as he told his story. "They say that every man has one great overriding sin. Mine seems to be fornication. I have a hard time dealing with it, and somewhere along the line I simply stopped dealing with and did it.

"When I was still in Scotland, I met a girl of whom I was very fond. We were both the same age, only fourteen at the time. One thing led to another, and we made love, only to be discovered by her mother. You would have thought I'd killed her. Her parents called me every name they could think of, while mine were apologizing as if they'd raised Jack the Ripper. The dominie lectured me about my evil ways. He told me that I'd go to hell for what I'd done to that poor girl, that I'd defiled her for the rest of her life. I hated myself for what I'd done. But, later, the girl came to me and asked to make love to her again. I thought that would have been the last thing this 'poor, defiled flower' would have wanted, but she did. I did as she asked, and I realized that the dominie was a liar. And if he wasn't a liar, and I was damned to hell anyway, I might as well enjoy my sin while I could.

"It was then that I decided to get out of that bloody village and come to America.

"Marcus, ever since then women have been just a way to pleasantly pass the time, a way to relieve my sexual tensions so I could concentrate on work. I was always certain that I would never marry. I certainly never thought I could fall in love."

Henry frowned. He closed his eyes and bent his head. Marcus was astonished when he saw the other man's shoulders shake with a suppressed sob. "I love her, Marcus. I really love her. How could I do so much harm to someone I love so much?"

Marcus sat there with Henry for hours. They talked of Sarah, the child, and spoiled plans for the future. They talked of their pasts and shared their hopes and dreams. The library closed, and they took their conversation to Marcus' room, and it was dawn before they even took notice of the time. During that long night, Marcus noticed that a remarkable thing took place: he became friends with Henry, through a bond of shared pain and shared love of Sarah. And although Marcus knew that he still loved Sarah, it had been redefined as the love of a friend. He no longer resented Henry for his possession of Sarah's love. He came to know that it was perfectly right in the order of things, as natural and as right as the very air he breathed. And he liked this man, this country fellow from Scotland. He was a bit unrefined around the edges, but Marcus knew that he was a good man--good enough even for Sarah.

Marcus emerged from the carriage and stared at the house in dismay. He turned back to face Henry as his friend stepped down from the coach.

"Henry, I really don't think this is a good idea."

"Marcus, don't back out now. I need you."

"But I don't think that I should be here with you when you talk to Sarah's father."

Henry clapped an arm around his shoulder and began leading him resolutely up the walk. "Please, Marcus, I need the support. Besides, he can't kill me with a witness."

"Unless he kills us both," Marcus muttered.

They walked up to the front porch, climbing the steps slowly. Henry paused at the door, wiping his hands nervously on his trouser legs. He gave a halfhearted smile to Marcus and reached for the knocker.

Marcus stopped him. "Are you ready for this?"

"No," Henry answered honestly. "But I have no choice." He rapped on the door.

The door was answered by a boy who looked to be about ten. The lad peered at them sourly for a moment and then turned and yelled back into the house, "Sarah, your boyfriends are here!"

Henry and Marcus glanced at each other.

The boy was almost immediately replaced by the stern figure of Professor Thomas Reichausen. Both young men immediately snapped to attention.

Henry pulled off his hat and thrust a hand forward--which was ignored. "Good afternoon, sir. We were invited to dinner by Sarah?"

The older man gazed disapprovingly at them both for a moment before grunting and stepping back to allow them to enter. Both young men went into the foyer. Marcus could instantly smell the aroma of food wafting in from the kitchen. It was wonderful. He looked around him as the elder Reichausen led them into the parlor.

The house was not at all what Marcus had imagined. In all the times he had waited on the front lawn for Sarah, he had envisioned this place as a dark, gloomy prison, worthy of Sarah's escape. Instead, he found that the Reichausen household was a cheery, bright home with white starched lace curtains at the windows and a roaring fire in the large fireplace. The room was decorated with dozens of knickknacks, plants, and photographs. There were lots of photos. Marcus could recognize only Sarah and the professor in some of them; the rest were strangers who bore a close resemblance to each other. There was a warmth in this house that belied Professor Reichausen's forbidding reputation.

"My name is Henry Jones," the young Scotsman was saying as Reichausen offered them seats. The two men shook hands perfunctorily, and Henry sat down awkwardly in a spindle chair that seemed much too small for his large frame.

Marcus offered his hand to the professor. "I don't know if you remember me, but I'm Marcus Brody."

The professor gave him a hostile stare. "Yes," he said icily. "I remember you."

Marcus felt uneasy under his stare and quietly took a seat at one end of the sofa. He placed his hat on his lap and concentrated on not fiddling with it the way he noticed Henry was.

Professor Reichausen took a seat across the room and folded his arms. The three men avoided looking at each other for several minutes until Reichausen cleared his throat.

"Mr. Jones, I understand that you are majoring in medieval literature."

Henry smiled widely. "Yes, sir."

"Not much future in that."

Henry's smile vanished.

"But I daresay it holds a great deal more potential than archaeology." And he shot a meaningful look at Marcus.

Marcus felt like crawling under his seat. "It's a relatively new field, sir, but I think it holds great promise."

"Perhaps."

Marcus swallowed. The man certainly knew how to kill a conversation. The silence returned and remained for several more minutes. Finally and mercifully, Sarah swept into the room. Both Henry and Marcus stood up quickly.

"Marcus, Henry," she beamed. Marcus could tell she was also nervous. She always acted overly solicitous when she was nervous. She had good reason to be. "How nice of you to accept my invitation. I see you've already met my father." She bent and gave her father a kiss on the cheek and patted him on the shoulder. "I trust you've been having a pleasant chat?"

Professor Reichausen shrugged. Marcus rolled his eyes as Henry nodded enthusiastically. He felt sorry for poor Henry. The young man was trying so hard to placate Reichausen that he scarcely knew what he was doing. Understandable, given the circumstances.

Sarah bade the two students take their seats again and took a place herself at the other end of Marcus' sofa. She sat there demurely, a smile frozen in place, looking anxiously between Marcus and her father, only occasionally stealing furtive glances at Henry.

At least with Sarah present, conversation actually took place, although it was inconsequential parlor talk. Marcus noticed that Sarah babbled nervously, and Henry did the same to cover up for Sarah. Reichausen joined in the conversation only sporadically. Marcus felt as if he were the last sane person in the room. He sat back and waited patiently for the day to be over.

At last they were called to dinner by the same young boy who had met them at the door. Everyone followed the professor out of the parlor and into the spacious dining room.

This room was just as cheerful as the parlor. The large table was laden with food that looked as delicious as it smelled. Several young boys scurried around the table to their usual places. Marcus assumed they were Sarah's brothers. She had told him before that she was the only daughter in a family of six brothers. They were all younger than she was. Sarah waited till the boys were seated and took a place on one side of the table. Professor Reichausen sat at the head of the table and gestured to Henry and Marcus to take the remaining two seats on the other side of the table from Sarah.

The last person to enter the room was a pleasant woman who could only have been Sarah's mother. She was plump, and her hair was pulled back in a severe bun, but Marcus could tell that this was where Sarah got her beauty. Mrs. Reichausen had the same perfect features that graced her daughter. In that fleeting moment, Marcus felt a pang of jealousy toward Henry. Sarah would always be beautiful, just like her mother.

Mrs. Reichausen placed in the center of the table and beamed as she sat down. "I'm sorry dinner is late. The maid is ill, and I had no help."

Henry and Marcus had risen as she took her seat, but they both sat down as they noticed Reichausen's disapproving glare.

The professor stood up and cleared his throat. "We will say grace."

It sounded like an order rather than an announcement. Everyone bowed his or her head.

"Dear heavenly Father, who art in heaven, we thank thee for this bountiful feast that is before us. We thank thee for thy multitude of gifts that thou hath given us."

Standard stuff, Marcus noted to himself. He allowed his attention to wander as Reichausen droned on, thanking God for everything but the kitchen sink. He glanced at Henry next to him and saw that Henry and Sarah, with heads still partially bowed, were looking at each other across the table. The look was one of pure love, and Marcus was surprised at himself for the ache he felt as he witnessed it. If only it had been him that Sarah graced with such a look. He would have given anything for that.

"And, Lord, we beseech thee to grant patience and wisdom to the young people here today," Reichausen droned on. Marcus' attention instantly returned. "We ask thee to bless the upcoming marriage of Sarah to Wilbur Hensel."

Marcus could feel Henry stiffen. Reichausen wasn't missing a trick at intimidation.

"We ask, Lord, that these children will listen to the wisdom of their parents and obey them without question, for thou hast granted to parents the knowledge of years, that children do not have, to know what is best for them."

Marcus sighed heavily. This did not bode well for Henry and Sarah's announcement. Reichausen was already in a combative mood. The prayer finally ended, and the professor took his seat. Everyone waited for him to cut the roast, and, one by one, they passed their plates to be served a generous slice of meat.

The meal proceeded in silence. Marcus became aware of many sidelong glances between the diners, but resolutely kept on eating. He also became aware of Reichausen's eyes on him. Why was the professor so angry with him? He hadn't done anything. God, he wished this day were over.

Later, after the meal was over and the boys had helped their mother clear the dishes, Mr. and Mrs. Reichausen, Sarah, and the two guests retired to the parlor for after-dinner coffee. Mrs. Reichausen seemed oblivious to her husband's disapproving attitude and chatted gaily with the young men. She seemed pleased to have guests, and Marcus could clearly see where Sarah got her gregarious nature. Mrs. Reichausen seemed genuinely interested in their talk about school, not at all disapproving of either student's chosen field. On the contrary, she seemed quite fascinated by Marcus' choice of archaeology. It was quite diverting talking to Sarah's mother, but Marcus knew that it couldn't last. They were here for a purpose--and not a pleasant one, at that.

At an appropriate pause in the conversation, Sarah set her coffee cup down and cleared her throat. "Mother, Father, I have something to tell you."

Marcus glanced at Henry and was fascinated by how pale he looked.

"Yes, Sarah?" her mother asked innocently.

"I have some distressing news."

At the look of alarm on both parents' faces, Marcus could see that they had already suspected the truth.

Sarah continued gamely. "I would never hurt either of you on purpose. I love you both too much to ever do that. But I am a young woman now. And, as such, I have done some things that women do."

Mrs. Reichausen's hand flew to her mouth in horror.

"But I consider what has happened not a terrible thing, but the beginning of a new life for me."

Professor Reichausen stood up, a guarded frown on his face. His wife reached up and clasped his hand.

Sarah swallowed hard. God, Marcus admired her resolve. "Mother, Father. I am going to have a baby."

Mrs. Reichausen let out a strangled cry, and her husband's eyes widened. Marcus could see that he was squeezing his wife's hand more than necessary. Poor man. How could any father listen to this kind of news?

"You bastard!" Reichausen cried suddenly and lunged at Marcus. Before Marcus quite understood what was happening, the professor had grabbed him by both lapels and lifted him from his seat. "I should give you the thrashing you deserve." He swung Marcus around and slammed him against the wall. Marcus felt his breath leave him, and his head banged back against the wood. He clutched at Reichausen's hands as he felt himself being lifted for another lunge.

Everyone leapt up. Mrs. Reichausen was pulling at her husband's arm, and Henry was trying to grab Marcus. Sarah watched in horror, her hands clutched at her stomach. "No," she groaned. "No, not Marcus."

Henry managed to get the professor's hands off Marcus and got Marcus out of reach of his attacker.

"Let me at him!" Reichausen roared.

Henry stood his ground between the two. "No. He's not the one."

"What in hell are you talking about?"

"Marcus isn't the father of the baby. I am."

Reichausen stopped and blinked stupidly at Henry. "**You**?" He was not prepared for this at all. He simply stared, open-mouthed.

Henry stood very straight and squared his shoulders. He walked over to Sarah and put his arm around her shoulders. "We intend to be married with or without your consent. We just thought you should know the truth of things first."

Reichausen looked at Henry, then at Marcus, and back at Henry. "You're that scholarship boy, aren't you?"

Henry nodded.

"You have no money. You have no way to support her. Just how in hell were you planning to live?"

Mrs. Reichausen suddenly spoke up, her voice harsh. "Thomas, watch your language. I will have none of that rough talk in my house." She pointed to his chair. "Now sit down and stop acting like a common brawler. We will discuss this matter in a civilized way."

Marcus was surprised when her husband responded meekly to her orders. The student brushed himself off and straightened his jacket before retaking his own seat. Reichausen's attack had taken him completely by surprise. No wonder the man had been so surly to him all day. He had thought all along that Marcus was the man Sarah was interested in. And when he stopped to think about it, it was only logical. Reichausen had never before met Henry out of a classroom setting. But Marcus had once actually called on his daughter, and the professor had searched him out at the college to deliver his "hands off" speech. He'd had good reason to presume the wrong man to be the father of Sarah's baby.

Henry and Sarah still stood in the middle of the room as Mrs. Reichausen took her seat. Sarah looked scared and vulnerable, but Henry had taken on a look of determination. He kept his arm firmly around Sarah's shoulders.

"We're sorry this happened," he began.

"Not nearly as sorry as we are," Mrs. Reichausen said.

"No, probably not," Henry answered her. "Because all you can see is the shame of what we've done, while Sarah and I can foresee a long and happy life together."

"How are you going to live?" the professor demanded angrily. "You're a poor boy from Scotland. You have nothing to give her."

"I can give her my love."

"You've already done that," Reichausen responded bitterly.

"Thomas, please."

"Didn't you think about what could happen?"

Henry momentarily lost his look of resolve. "No, sir. We didn't."

Mrs. Reichausen interrupted as her husband started to speak. "Obviously not. But I don't think that is of importance now. Now we must consider Sarah's future and the child's."

"What about Henry's future?" Sarah asked.

"Henry be damned!" Reichausen yelled. He leapt up again and charged at Henry.

Henry pushed Sarah away from him and stood his ground. He raised his fists in defiance. "Come on, then. Beat me up if it'll make you feel better. Hell, it'd probably make me feel better."

Reichausen paused at that.

"How in hell d'you think I feel about this? I **love** Sarah. I never meant for this to happen. I was selfish and stupid, but I never willfully hurt her."

Reichausen frowned at him, obviously struggling within himself. Whatever battles he waged, he evidently lost because he turned around angrily and kicked at a chair. But when he turned around again, the look of anger had been completely replaced by one of sadness. He took a couple of steps forward until he and Henry stood face to face. He studied the young man a moment before speaking. "Sarah is my only daughter. I wanted so much for her." He shook his head in defeat. "When you have children, your expectations are so high for them. You want so much more for them than you had when you were raised. You only want the best for them. And now you stand here and tell me that all my hopes for Sarah are gone." He turned away from Henry and ran a weary hand through his hair. "Well, what's done is done. My wife is right. Now we have to consider what is best for Sarah and the child."

"And Henry," Sarah added defiantly.

Reichausen snorted in derision. "And Henry," he mocked.

Mrs. Reichausen had watched the scene in silence. "I suppose, Sarah, that marriage to Mr. Hensel is out of the question?"

Sarah stared at her in disbelief. "It most certainly is!"

"Well, I had to ask. Mr. Hensel could have been persuaded to marry you in spite of the child."

"Never!"

"There you have it. Now we have to decide what to do with you two."

Henry stepped forward, a frown growing on his face. "Look, I know that you have the right to be angry with me, but I don't think you have the right to make decisions for us. Whether you like it or not, Sarah and I are getting married, and we'll raise our child, your grandchild. Whether it is with your consent and help, or whether we have to run off, is totally up to you. But hear me when I say this: Sarah and I will be husband and wife."

Mrs. Reichausen sighed. "I suspected as much."

Reichausen spread his hands in supplication. "And how are you going to support a wife and child?"

"I'll find a way. I'll leave college. I can get a job at the mill any time I ask."

Reichausen paused. "At the mill?"

"I know someone who works there. He could get me in."

The professor shook his head. "The mill has no future. It's back-breaking labor for little pay. That would be stupid."

"You asked me how I was going to support her. I gave you my answer."

The Reichausens looked at each other. Sarah's mother stood up and took her husband's hand. A look of silent communication passed between them, an understanding born of many years of living together. Professor Reichausen went to stand in front of Sarah. He hugged her to him, kissing the top of her head. Sarah melted gladly in his arms.

"Sarah, we both love you dearly and, while we certainly don't approve of what the two of you have done, we also will not stand by and let you ruin your lives. Henry must finish college in order to become a good provider for you, and he can't do that if he must take a job now. After you're married, you will come to live with us until Henry finishes his degree and you both can manage on your own."

"Oh, Daddy!" Sarah hugged him back fiercely.

Henry sagged a little. "Thank you, sir."

Reichausen glared at him over Sarah's shoulder. "Don't thank me, boy. Just don't ever do anything to hurt my daughter again, or I swear to you that I will finish what I tried to do today."

"Understood."

"Good. Now, you and your friend will please leave. We'd like to be alone with Sarah for a while."

"Yes, sir." Henry started to kiss Sarah good-bye, but was stopped by Reichausen's baleful glare. "Uh--Sarah, I'll see you tomorrow."

Henry gathered his hat and pulled at Marcus' sleeve. As the two stood at the door, putting their coats on, Henry grinned and patted Marcus on the back. "I'm glad that's over. It didn't go so badly."

Marcus looked at him in amazement and rubbed the back of his head. But he said nothing as he followed his friend out into the cold. What was there to say? Well, he pondered, no one ever said knowing Henry and Sarah was going to be dull.

Marcus pulled at his collar for perhaps the hundredth time that morning. He hated wearing his dress suit; the starched white collar dug at his neck. He glanced again at the wedding party waiting impatiently at the front of the church and rolled his eyes. Dear God, all that trouble with Sarah's parents and Henry had the gall to be late to his wedding.

After the confrontation at the Reichausens', the wedding had been hastily arranged. The date was set for two weeks later, Sarah worried that a wedding dress wouldn't fit if she waited much later. Mrs. Reichausen gamefully arranged for a private ceremony and a modest reception to be held at their home. Only family members and close friends were invited. And since Henry had no family in America, and Marcus was his only close friend, the guest list was decidedly one-sided.

Marcus took out his watch and checked it again. The wedding was to have taken place at 11 o'clock, but it was nearly noon, and Henry was nowhere to be seen. Marcus replaced his watch and cast a half-hearted smile toward the front of the church. The smile was not returned.

Sarah gathered her bridal skirt and hurried up the aisle toward Marcus. She looked more worried than angry.

"Marcus, where **is** he?"

"I don't know. He told me to meet him here. I don't know what could have happened to him."

"My father is ready to explode. Oh, Marcus, what if he's sick? Or hurt?"

Marcus pondered that. The only thing that could keep a man from his own wedding was, unfortunately, a mishap. Unless . . . Marcus cast a quick glance at Sarah. What if Henry had changed his mind? What if he had suddenly decided he wanted no part of a compulsory marriage and had taken off? It wouldn't be the first time a young man had gotten a woman pregnant and left her standing at the altar. After all, what did Marcus really know about Henry? Henry was a loner and quite unpredictable. Marcus didn't want to think it, but maybe he really was the cad Sarah's father suspected he was.

Sarah sat down in one of the pews with a heavy sigh. "Marcus, what if he's changed his mind?"

Marcus started guiltily, feeling as if she had read his mind. He sat down next to her and took her hand. "I'm sure that's not it. It's got to be something else."

"What?" She looked at him bleakly. "What if he's hurt?"

"Don't think such thoughts. Here, if it will make you feel better, I'll go look for him."

She looked at him hopefully. "Would you? Please?"

He patted her hand. "Of course. You just wait here, and I'll--"

He was cut off by the sound of the church door slamming in the vestibule and the clatter of running feet. Marcus, along with everyone else, looked toward the noise to see a very frazzled Henry coming into the building.

Sarah leapt to her feet and threw herself into Henry's arms. "Oh, my God, Henry, I thought you were hurt!"

Henry grinned in embarrassment. "I'm sorry. I overslept."

Sarah drew back, frowning at him. "You overslept?"

"I'm very sorry, Sarah, I--"

"The most important day of our lives and you overslept?"

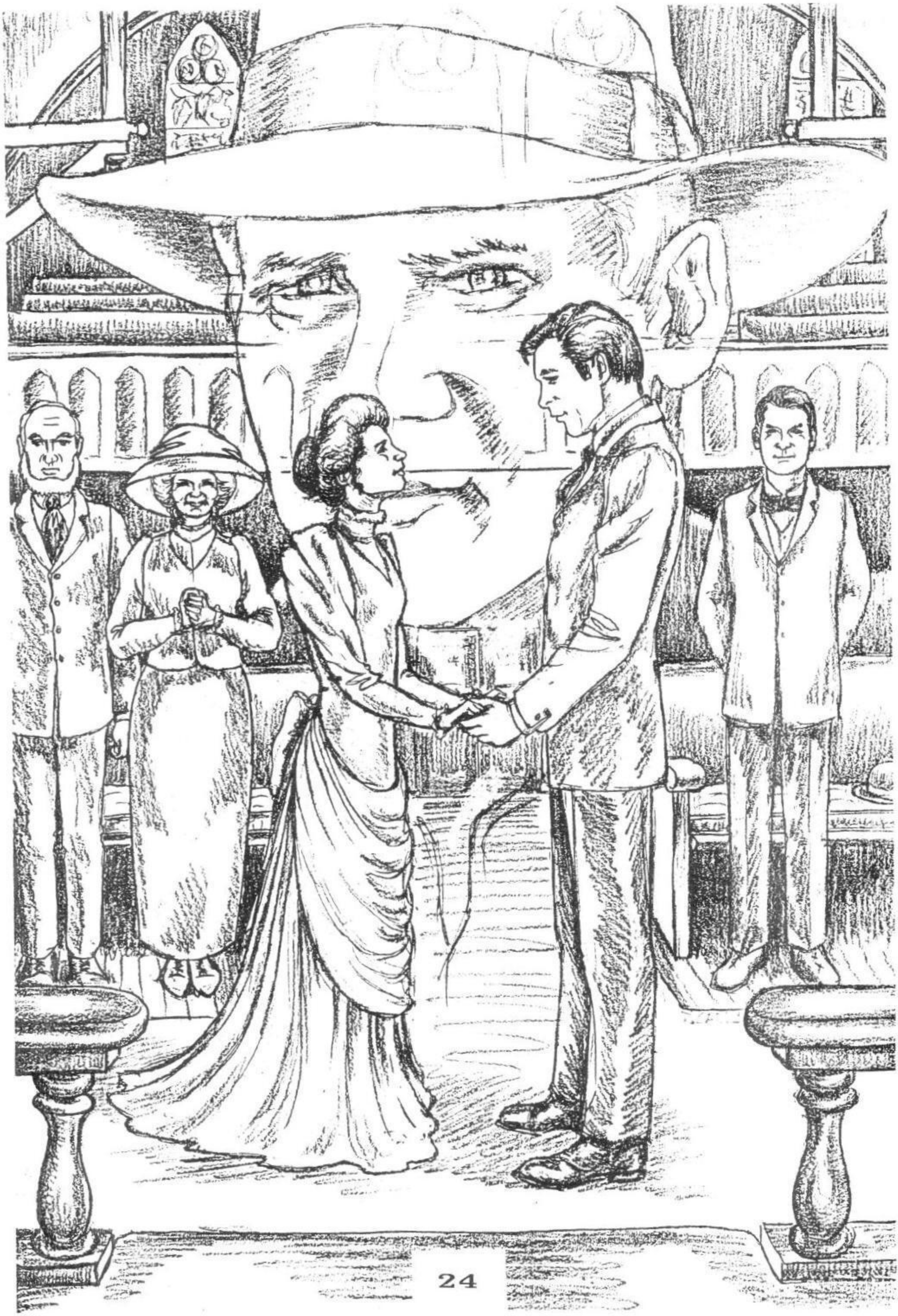
Henry looked appropriately ashamed. "I didn't get much sleep last night, and, when I finally did, I didn't wake up in time."

That seemed to mollify Sarah, whose frown gradually gave way to an understanding smile. "You were nervous," she teased.

"No," Henry answered honestly. "I was reading a book."

Sarah stared at him blankly. "A book?"

"I found the most spellbinding book," Henry began excitedly. "It's about the Holy Grail. I never knew that the legends surrounding it were so fasci-



nating. I couldn't stop reading."

Sarah blinked as she tried to comprehend what Henry was saying.

"I now know what my thesis will be about--the Grail legends. It's perfect, Sarah, don't you see? If I can do enough research, maybe I can sort out what is fact and what is fiction. Then I can--"

"Henry!" Sarah's voice was soft, but firm. "Do you mean to tell me that you're late to your own wedding because of a **book**?"

Henry looked perplexed. "No. I'm late because I overslept."

"Because you stayed up reading a book!"

"Well, what's wrong with that?"

"Henry, last night was the night before your wedding!" Sarah exclaimed in exasperation.

"Yes, I'm quite aware of that. I don't understand why you're upset."

Sarah stared at him, open-mouthed in amazement. Gradually, the look softened to one of amusement, and she began to laugh. "You really don't, do you?"

Henry shook his head innocently, even more confused by her laughter.

Sarah threw her arms around his neck and hugged him tightly. "Henry, you are a wonder. Don't ever change." She kissed him deeply, long and lovingly, drawing several disapproving stares from the front of the church.

Marcus watched in silence, grateful that Henry had made it without his having to go search for him. He was silently amused by Henry's excuse, but he kept it to himself. Sarah was certainly going to have her hands full with this man. When the kiss went on beyond the limits of propriety, Marcus cleared his throat.

Henry and Sarah looked up questioningly.

"I'm sorry to intrude, but there **is** a wedding scheduled to take place today."

Sarah's hand flew to her mouth to hide a mischievous laugh. "I do suppose this can wait until later."

Marcus raised his eyebrows at her risque hint and followed as Sarah grabbed Henry's hand and led him down the aisle. He took his place at the front of the church by Henry's side as his best man.

As the ceremony began, Marcus watched the two people standing next to him. Here it was, just a few short months since that fateful night when he had introduced these two to each other. It had been winter then, but now spring was just beginning, along with their life together and their child. It all seemed poetically appropriate.

He knew that he had never resolved all of his feelings for Sarah, and somewhere inside him he realized that perhaps he never would. But he also realized that it didn't matter. He was her friend. He was Henry's friend. That was as close to her as he would ever get. And it was enough.

Southern Discomfort

by

Susan Zahn

Note: Sue wants her readers to know that this story was conceived and written long before **The Last Crusade** was released.

New Orleans, Louisiana. 1928

The music was infectious, and, before he realized it, Indiana Jones was tapping his foot to the "Tiger Rag." Through the smokey haze, he could barely make out the five-man Dixieland band that occupied a distant corner of the crowded speakeasy. The room was noisy, colorful, and a bit on the stifling side as it was mid-August and the heat slow in dissipating. But the climate was not deterring the crowd from its enjoyment, and, in spite of the fact he was there in the French Quarter on business, he was sorely tempted to join in.

The small table he had acquired stood in a dark corner, within view of the exit, and repeatedly his hazel gaze would pass in that direction. Jock was late.

And then, as if on cue, the flimsy screen door leading to the outside swung open and a purposeful-looking man stepped in dressed in a sweat-stained blue shirt and baggy trousers. He paused on the step leading down to the main floor, searching eyes shadowed by a white straw panama hat.

Indiana waved discreetly. The man caught sight of him, nodded in acknowledgement, and started making his way through the flurry of people. He stepped up to the table and relaxed into the chair across from the college professor, letting out an explosive sigh. His hand went up to wipe the sweat on his forehead, causing his hat to tip back. "It's hot in here!"

"Yeah," Jones agreed distractedly, glancing at his own hat, a brown fedora that sat in the middle of the table. "So are they ready?"

"Yeah, sure, Indy. About three blocks away, on Decatur Street. They're waitin' right now."

"Then let's go." Indiana began to stand, reaching for his hat.

Jock's hand shot out, grasping the other's wrist firmly. "Xavier might have friends. I only saw one, but there're probably more hidden. Keep your eyes peeled, huh?"

The archaeologist flashed a quick grin before straightening up. "You worry too much, Jock. Besides, I've got some friends myself." To emphasize his point, he brushed back a corner of his untucked white shirt, revealing the wooden grip of a revolver. Jock's eyes widened a little, and his lips were opening to comment, but Jones stopped him by prudently clamping a hand over his mouth.

"Outside," Indy ordered.

Not waiting for an argument, he began threading his way towards the exit. Jock dutifully followed.

The light drizzle of rain had finally quit, but the wide cobblestones of the dirty back alley sparkled in the weak light coming from the single streetlamp at the end of the alley. The summer humidity was miserable, even at night, and Indiana frowned, pulling at his shirt when it insisted on clinging to him.

"Do you really think you'll need the piece? That's only askin' for trouble."

"I never **ask** for trouble." Jones nodded his head in the direction of the streetlight, suggesting they move on. "Anyway, I trust **it** more than I trust them."

They walked in silence a short time, then Jock spoke up tentatively. "You don't actually believe they've found the Fountain of Youth, do you?" He glanced up at his old friend when he noticed Indy was taking an unusually long time to answer. He was about to repeat the question when Indy unexpectedly laughed.

"Do I believe it? No, of course not." He chuckled. "I'm an archaeologist, not some conquistador with delusions of grandeur. For as long as people have been growing old, they've been looking for an easy way to stay young. The easiest was thinking up some mythical wellspring of youth. It's all just fanciful dreams and nonsense."

There was another moment of silence as they neared the end of the alley. Jock finally ventured, "Then why are you goin' through with this, dealin' with these people, if it's all just nonsense?"

Underneath the streetlamp, Indiana stopped, tipping his head as if honestly considering the question. Ironically, the deep shadow caused by the wide brim of his fedora hid the strange gleam that had appeared in the professor's dark eyes, or else Jock might have thought twice about his friend's real interest.

"They have a map," Jones stated softly. "One of the original maps Juan Ponce de Leon used. It's worth a lot--historically."

"Could be a map leading to the Fountain. Ya never know."

"It's just an early chart the Seminoles had a hand in making. It's very valuable, but I doubt seriously that it's got the classic 'X marks the spot' that would lead us to the Fountain."

"Oh . . . Well, at least maybe you'll get a little glory out of gettin' this map."

"Glory?" Indiana echoed, sounding amused.

"Sure. If what you've said's true about it just bein' an old map, it'll still look good in the Sunday papers, but if it really **does** lead to the Water of Life, we're talking some serious fortune here."

There was a little grin curling up a corner of the archaeologist's mouth as he stared at his partner for a minute. "Fortune and glory?" He nodded his head little, his grin widening. "Fortune and glory. I like the sound of that."

A short time later, Jock was leading him down another back alley; he stopped at a darkened doorstep. "Right here. They're up on the second floor, so we'll have to watch our backs."

"Got it. Ready?" Indiana waited for Jock's nod of agreement before rapping his knuckles soundly on the heavy wooden door.

An instant later the door swung out, revealing what could only be loosely termed as a maitre d'. His massive bulk blocked all light that tried to escape out into the damp alleyway. Indiana Jones was no slouch when it came to height, but as he looked up--and up--until eventually he met a pair of steely-grey eyes, he could feel his stomach sinking.

The stranger literally looked over Jones's shoulder to see Jock and nodded his head in silent recognition. Dropping his gaze back to the archaeologist, he grunted. "Only one." A thick, black mustache gave the towering giant a demeanor that said **Don't mess with me,** and Indiana wasn't about to take him up on the challenge. He glanced back at his partner.

Jock shrugged, almost as if having expected the separation. "Go ahead," he urged, taking one step backwards. "But be careful."

"What could possibly go wrong?" Indy asked, smiling impudently up at his immense escort.

Jock watched as the door closed, the click of the lock echoing around him as he contemplated his friend's last comment. He gazed up at the single narrow window directly above the entrance. A torn and yellowing shade hid the illuminated interior, but he could make out the dark silhouettes of moving figures. He hesitated, then headed back the way he'd come moments before.

The stairwell leading upstairs was tight and confining, and the heavy breathing of the gorilla-sized doorman didn't relieve Indiana's growing sense of unease. Reaching the top, they headed down the hall towards the only door at the far end. Indy was reminded of lemmings marching towards a cliff and just as quickly pushed the image out of his mind, not liking the implications.

They stopped at the door, and, before Jones could protest the rough treatment, the hulking giant grasped him by the shoulders, twirled him around, and patted him down. He wasted no time in finding the military-issue pistol. He shook his head in what Jones swore was derision, tucked the gun under his own belt, and reached for the door handle.

The door swung open, revealing an old wooden desk and an equally aged, pale-skinned man seated behind it. The man rose, waving his arm in a wide, welcoming gesture. "Ah, Dr. Jones, come in. We've been waiting."

As the professor did so, he didn't fail to notice that his huge companion did the same, closing the door behind them. He quickly gave the small room the once-over; other than the door he had just used, there was one other, to his right, and a narrow window directly behind and above the desk. Indy guessed that it looked out over the dreary back alley. The room was lit by a pair of hurricane lamps arranged on the desktop so that they cast strangely angled shadows on the dingy wallpaper.

Then Jones's attention was snared by the single sheet of obviously ancient paper resting in the center of the desk. He had to practically drag his eyes away as his host continued to speak.

"I am Xavier. I see that you've met my assistant Maurice."

"Yes, he's made himself quite familiar," Indiana replied, casting another glance back at the gargantuan attendant who had stationed himself, arms crossed over his massive chest, in front of the exit. "Now that we've all gotten to know each other, why don't we get down to business?" Without further preamble, he pointed to the paper. "Is that it?" A stupid question, actually, since he could clearly make out the vague outline of the Florida panhandle.

Instead of answering, Xavier seemed to sigh as he reseated himself. "I'm afraid, Dr. Jones, that this will not be as easy as we had first anticipated. A complication has arisen that--"

"What is it?" Indiana interrupted impatiently, his earlier feelings of uncertainty gnawing at his composure. Damn, but he'd known things had been going too smoothly this time.

"There is another interested party," Xavier stated matter-of-factly. "He is willing to meet and exceed any offer you may propose."

Jones was silent for a moment, considering this new twist. His eyes were drawn irresistibly to the map, his mind cluttered with different priorities; calculating, reasoning, fantasizing . . . The Fountain of Eternal Youth? "Who is he?" he asked, his sense of foreboding nearly throbbing now.

Xavier made a curt gesture with his hand, and Maurice moved across the musty room to the other door. Indiana tensed, wishing not for the first time, not for the last, that'd he'd been just a bit more discreet in choosing his firearm. He set his jaw--Hell, even his whip would've been better than nothing!--and the hackles on the back of his neck rose when he saw who stepped through the door.

"Good evening, Dr. Jones." The salutation was uttered with a thick French accent, even stronger than Xavier's, that made Indiana grimace with its familiarity.

"Belloq." The professor said the name like a curse and meant it.

"We seem destined to cross paths," the handsome Frenchman said, his well-groomed blond hair and impeccable clothing out of place in this filthy building.

"Never was known for my luck," Jones mumbled, throttling an urge to cry out in pure frustration. He swore Rene Belloq could smell whenever he was onto something good--the sacred caves in eastern Afghanistan, the burial mounds in southern Wisconsin, and now this!

"True. It is not your good fortune that has made you famous," Rene retorted without missing a beat.

Cagey little bastard, Indiana thought, noticing the way his competition was eyeing the map as well. His voice dropped noticeably in pitch. "I was under the impression that this would be on a first come, first serve basis, Xavier."

"Ah, but you must understand **my** position, Dr. Jones." Xavier didn't like the cold gleam in the American's eyes, the chilling glare that hadn't been there before. "Only under extreme circumstances did I come across this chart. I must make this exchange worth my while."

"And I have promised that I would," Rene added, unable to resist flaunting yet another victory in the professor's face. Their antagonistic relationship went back to their days in graduate school, and he revelled at having bested the American once more.

Indiana fumed. Much as he hated the Frenchman, he respected Rene's ability to judge worthwhile artifacts. The fact Belloq had shown up, albeit suddenly, supported the authenticity of the map . . . The Wellspring of Youth?

"Ten thousand," Indiana stated flatly, angry that this was already double the originally agreed on offer. Any higher, and Marshall College wouldn't back him anymore.

Xavier drew a deep breath, and Belloq flashed a brilliantly white smile that made the Illinois-born archaeologist nauseous.

"I'm sorry, but Monsieur Belloq's offer already stands at twelve thousand."

There was a quiet pause as Indiana glanced from his contact to the object of his desire to his gloating rival. This was insult added to injury. "I want some time," he finally said, hoping determination alone would overrule any objections. He should have known better.

"This is absurd!" Belloq burst out, momentarily dropping his European-bred air. "The map is mine, the deal has been made."

"Now wait just one goddamn' minute, Belloq," Indy rumbled threateningly. He was halted from any further protest as Xavier suddenly stood, his otherwise pale cheeks now flushed with indignation.

"Stop this! The map is **mine**! I make the deals!" His black eyes flicked from one opponent to the other, his own mind quickly filling with the opportunities holding out for a higher bid could offer. He made his decision. "There will be no deal."

Silence filled the room once again. The tension was palpable.

Rene wet his dry lips.

Indiana clenched his fists.

Xavier made a move for the map.

Belloq and Jones dove for the map on the desk, crashing into each other sideways. All three men managed to get hold of the relic and began tugging over it like children, until Indy decided to play rough and jabbed a boot heel into Rene's shin. With a pain-filled curse, Belloq struck back a well-aimed elbow, catching his rival in the chin.

The chart, being as old as it was, wasn't up to that kind of stress and gave up the ghost with a loud rip. There followed a moment of awed silence as all three combatants stared at their portions of the once-precious artifact. Then Indy realized he'd forgotten the doorman when huge hands unexpectedly took hold of his arms, pinning them to his sides.

"You fools!" Xavier cried, having found his voice after witnessing such a mindless destruction of history--particularly since it was still his. "Look what you've done!"

Indiana wasn't paying any attention to Xavier's raving. He was trying his best to wiggle out of the giant's tightening grasp, as Maurice began lifting him off his feet.

Belloq, knowing when to cut his losses and run, did just that, turning on his heels and running for the side door he'd used earlier.

Marshalling his energy, Jones twisted furiously. Maurice set him back down in order to get a better grip, but Indy didn't wait. He kicked his foot back, snagged it around his assailant's ankle, and jerked it forward. With a loud bellow, the huge man lost his footing and toppled backwards, taking the archaeologist with him.

They hit the floor with a jarring thud, the shock enough to loosen Maurice's hold. Jones rolled off and half-crawled, half-ran for the door he'd entered through, his torn remnant of the old Spanish map still clutched in his fist. Although a little slow in recovering, Maurice was soon up and charging down the narrow hallway in pursuit.

Still enraged, Xavier watched helplessly as the American professor and Maurice careened down the corridor and out of sight in the stairwell. He could hear the thunder of their echoing footsteps and the alley door slamming twice.

"Such a waste." Xavier looked down at the tiny corner of parchment in his hand, all that remained of his valuable map. "**C'est la vie,**" he finally sighed, sinking down in his seat once more.

He leaned forward to pull out the bottom desk drawer, reached in, and picked up a clear, glass decanter with a diamond-cut pattern. He held the small bottle up to the subdued light of a kerosene lamp, watching as the tiny rainbow reflections coming from the crystalline liquid danced on the tabletop. Xavier smiled.

Taking the stairs in three bounds, Indiana hit the door at full force. It flew open with a jarring rattle, and he stumbled out into the omnipresent silence of the alley. The moisture-laden air hit him with as much force as the door had, and he labored for breath as he hesitated in deciding his next course of action. The choice was made for him when he heard the rapidly nearing grunts of Maurice, who was tackling the stairs at a more moderate pace due to his less graceful size. Not really interested in pursuing a matter made academic by Belloq's getting away with the other half of the map, Indy decided discretion would be the better part of valor and started racing for the streetlamp in the distance.

Somewhat dismayed by his prey's lead and not particularly inclined to chase down the lithe professor, Maurice opted for a more convenient and certainly more satisfying solution. He drew out the newly acquired gun from his belt, ground to a halt in the mist-blurred twilight, and squeezed off a round. The shot rang out, and Indy cursed, reflexively flinging up protective arm as the poorly aimed bullet shattered one of the few windows adorning the passageway. Not really surprised at the Frenchman's capitalizing on such an unfair advantage, Jones leaned into his dash. He disappeared around the corner just as a second round was fired, taking out a chunk of red brick where his head had been only a second before.

Not really watching where he was going, Jones gasped in relief, then nearly screamed as he plowed into another body that had appeared from the shadows. Adrenaline helped him to regain his bearings quickly, and he stared in exasperation at what he'd collided with. "Damn! Jock, don't ever do that again!" He began to very carefully fold up the torn segment of map, then stashed it in the breast pocket of his shirt.

A little shaken up since he had fully expected the professor to actually stop, Jock floundered for a response. "I heard shootin' and--" Suddenly realizing his friend's breathlessness was due to more than the recent scare, his blue eyes narrowed in suspicion. "You're in trouble again, ain't'cha?"

"Not now," Indiana growled, not interested in hearing another one of the man's less than astute observations. He grabbed his friend's right arm and practically dragged him down the street towards the boarding docks along the Mississippi.

Straight ahead sat a paddle-wheel steamer, looking for all the world like a Christmas tree with its thousands of tiny white lights outlining the triple-tiered decks. Hands were tossing off the bow- and stern-lines, and the single, wide-bladed wheel at the stern was beginning to lazily turn over.

Seeing that the riverboat was pulling away, Jock tried to slow down. Jones had other ideas in mind and continued down the slightly inclined road. By the time Jones had dragged Jock onto the rain-slicked pier, the boat had put at least fourteen feet between them.

Jock's eyes widened in alarm when he realized that the otherwise mild-mannered professor wasn't intending to stop. "Ohhhhh **shit**!"

"Jump!" Releasing his grip on his friend's arm, Jones leapt off the edge of the pier, stretching to his full length and aiming for the side railing on the lower deck. He missed his intended target by less than a foot, but still succeeded in grasping the deck ledge. The momentum of the jump caused him to smack against the side of the boat, but he clung tenaciously by one hand, his feet dangling down and getting thoroughly soaked.

Unfortunately, Jock had not been prepared for such a leap and missed the side of the passenger steamer completely. Before belly-flopping into the murky river, he caught hold of Jones's trouser leg. The added weight and drag nearly caused Indiana to lose his grip.

"Goddammit, Indy," Jock sputtered, trying in vain to wipe the water from his eyes as he was dragged unceremoniously along. "You and your ideas."

"Aw, shut up," Indiana grumbled as he reached up with his other hand to get a firmer grip on the side of the ledge. "It worked, didn't it?"

A sardonic laugh drifted up that was loud enough to be heard over the steady chugging of the steam-powered engine and the rhythmic slap of the paddles. "My mother warned me 'bout hangin' round with you."

* * *

The Strength of Sorrow

by

Diane Fleming

The room was dark even though it was the middle of the day. The heavy drapes always remained closed now. Indiana wrinkled his nose at the pungent smell of the medicine that permeated the small bedroom. It was a horrible odor that he still could not get used to even after three months of having to deal with it. Usually when he entered the room, he tried to hold his breath, but that was a strategy that nearly always backfired on him. His chores in the room inevitably took longer than his ability to hold his breath, and he found that after expelling the very last of the used breath from his lungs, his body automatically forced him to draw a large intake of air and he got the full force of the medicinal odor, making him gag. This time, however, he took small, shallow breaths under the assumption that a little would not smell as bad as a lot. It didn't really work.

He closed the door quietly behind him, balancing the tray of food in one hand. It wasn't very appetizing food, a bowl of mushy soup of some kind he could not readily identify and a piece of bread soaked in milk. He set the tray down on the table next to the bed and looked at the woman who lay there so silently that he thought she was dead. But then he was used to that feeling; he felt it every time he entered the room.

"Mom?"

The woman on the bed stirred, her eyes flickering open at the sound of his voice. "Henry?"

Indiana winced at the name, but didn't bother to correct her. She was ill, and he instinctively understood that it was her illness that made her revert to his real name. Before she had gotten sick, she had always tried to call him by his preferred name, Indiana--unlike his father, who never understood his hatred of the name Henry or the equally loathed nickname, Junior. His father never took the time to understand anything that Indiana cared about.

"I have your lunch here, Mom."

Rebecca Jones struggled to raise herself a little on the pillows. She smiled weakly at her son. "Thank you, Henry. You're so thoughtful."

Indiana placed the tray across her lap and helped her to drape the napkin on her chest. He watched bleakly as she tried to pick up the spoon and retrieve some of the soup. But halfway to her mouth, the strength of her thin hands gave way. The spoon tilted, and the soup spilled down the front of her. Indiana expected her to be frustrated as she had been in the past when this had happened. But this time she just dropped the spoon back to the tray listlessly and gazed at him with a weak smile.

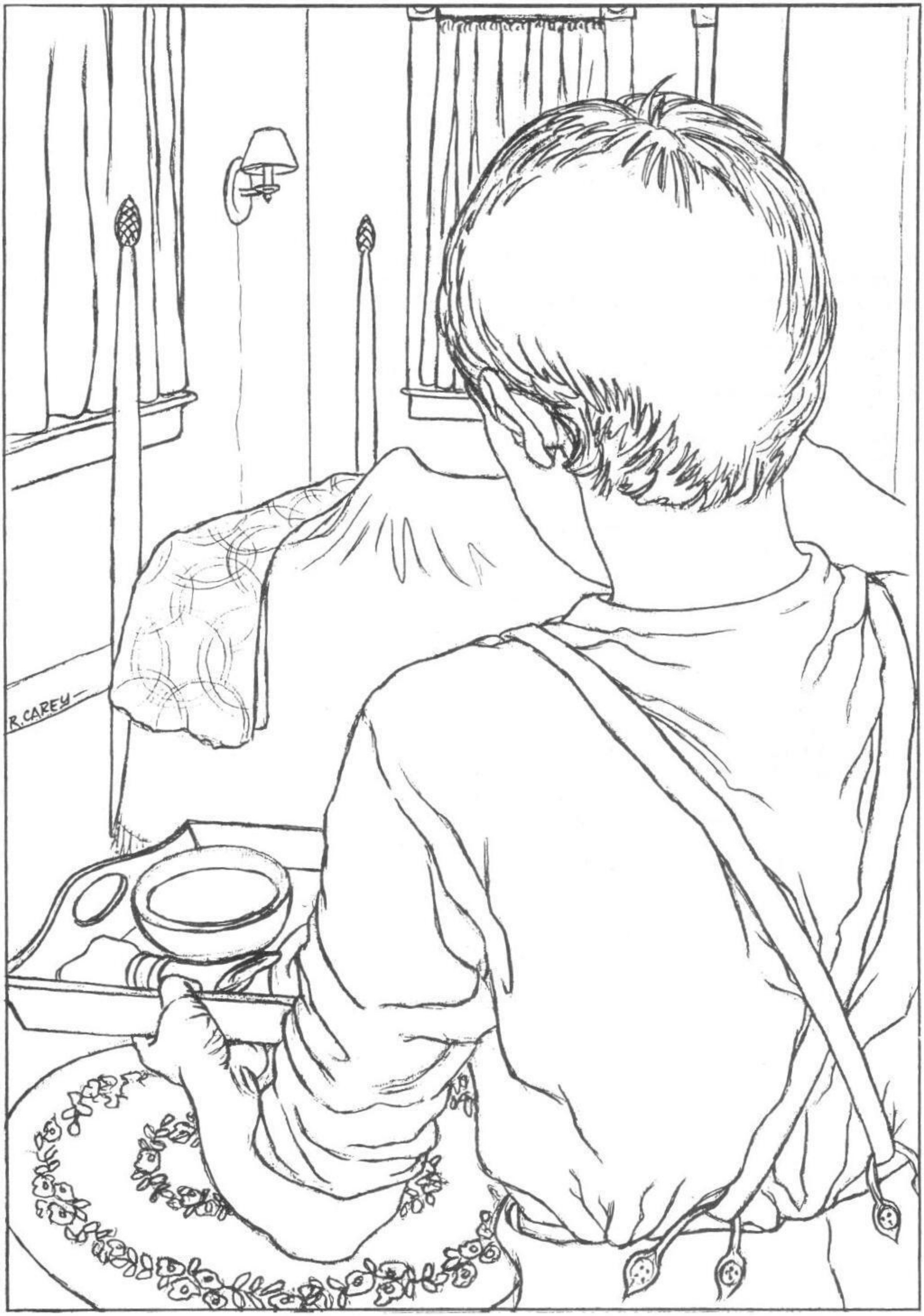
"I seem to be clumsy today," was all she said. She closed her eyes and leaned back into the pillows.

Indiana sighed and picked up the spoon. He scooped up some soup and held it in front of his mother's mouth. "Here, Mom. I'll feed you."

Rebecca opened her eyes again, and it was as if he had just entered the room. "Henry, how nice of you to come."

Indiana hated the churning in his stomach, but he forced himself to overcome it and held the spoon patiently. "Come on, it'll get cold."

Rebecca seemed to see the spoon for the first time and opened her mouth for


R.CAREY

a bit. She made a face at the taste of it. "Your father's been cooking again, hasn't he?"

Indy grinned in spite of himself. "Yeah. Maria had to go to Sonora for the weekend. She said her daughter is getting married."

Rebecca smiled dreamily. "How nice. I met Maria's daughter once. She is a very nice girl." She took another spoonful of soup. "I'm very happy for her."

The process of feeding her did not take long, and the sound of her voice was very pleasant. It almost made Indiana forget the pitifully thin face that formed the words. She had lost so much weight that she was like a skeleton covered with a thin pale gauze. Indy tried to remember what she looked like before the illness, but the apparition before him was too strong. It was as if she had always been ill, as if she had always lain here in this bed, in this dark room, in this ghastly smell of medicine.

When she was through eating, she settled down on the bed and was asleep even before Indy had removed the tray from the bed. He tiptoed out, careful not to let the door bang shut behind him. He was grateful to be out of that room.

"Junior!"

Indiana jumped at the sound of his father's deep voice. He turned to see him at the kitchen doorway down the hall, looking at him sternly.

"Yes, Dad?"

"Did she eat?"

"Yes."

"All of it?"

"Yes."

Henry, Senior wiped his hands absently down the front of his vest, the food from his cooking staining his clothes. "All right." He turned abruptly and went back into the kitchen. Indiana followed his father into the dirty kitchen and put the tray on the table. The place was a mess. He wished Maria was here to help clean up.

The middle-aged Mexican woman had been a godsend when Rebecca Jones had become ill. She lived down the road about three miles, with a house full of her own children to care for. But each day she walked up the dusty road to the Jones residence and helped cook and clean for a couple of hours before she trudged back home to her own chores. Indy's father had gratefully offered to pay her, but Maria had declined huffily, insulted by his offer. "Neighbors help neighbors," was her standard reply. And she would hear no more of Henry's attempts to pay her.

Indy's father was currently standing in front of the wood-burning stove, waiting for a large cauldron of water to boil. He was dressed as he always dressed: suit pants and vest, the heavily starched white shirt--the sleeves of which he had rolled up to his elbows--and the ever-present tie. Indiana thought for a moment, but could not remember him dressed any other way. It was all part of the inaccessibility that his father seemed to wrap carefully around him. Henry's large frame and height, coupled with the dark, full beard he wore, added to that impression. Indy glanced up at this father's closed face. The expression on that face was one of deep thought, and Indy wondered idly what his father was thinking about. He never knew what his father was thinking about.

"I'll help you wash the dishes," Indy said in a low voice.

Henry grunted without looking at him. Indiana cautiously made his way around the table. Picking up a dishtowel, he waited patiently for his father to start the dishes. When the water boiled, the two males, one a man in his mid-thirties and the other a boy of ten quietly but efficiently washed and dried the dirty mound of dishes. They didn't talk. They didn't even look at each other, but Indy was somehow comforted by his father's strong presence. It helped negate the picture of his mother, helpless and weak in the small, dreaded bedroom.

They had just about finished their chore when the front screen door banged with repeated knocking. "Henry?" a voice called.

Henry quickly dried his hands and hurried toward the front room. Indy continued with the dishes, but he took his time, wanting to avoid Dr. Masters if at all possible. He had come to hate the man. He listened to the distant voices.

"Hello, Doctor," Indy could hear his father greet their visitor. He heard the rusty springs of the screen door as it opened and the soft bang of its closing.

"Afternoon, Henry. How are you holding up?"

"Fine. Fine. How are you?"

Indy thought the two men sounded incredibly idiotic exchanging the same pleasantries every week. It was always the same.

"I'm fine. How's the boy?"

Indiana winced. He hated "the boy" even worse than "Junior."

"He's doing fine."

No, he's **not** doing fine, Indy thought angrily. Fat lot you cared, you old bastard. It was a new word he had heard at school. He liked it. He wasn't quite sure of its meaning, but he knew the context was generally correct.

"How's Rebecca?"

"Fine."

Indy threw the dishtowel on the table and ran out the back door. No, dammit! Everything **wasn't** fine! Why the hell did his father have to say that? He ran as far from the house as he could before dropping to the ground, panting in the incredible Utah heat. He had learned early on in his mother's illness that running helped to relieve the tears that always seemed to be brimming just below the surface of his eyes. He hated crying, and he hated the way his father criticized him whenever he did.

He lay back on the parched brown grass and gazed up at the sky. The tears came anyway, and Indiana was grateful that his father was not present to witness the dreadful display. Why? Why did it have to happen to their family? Why was his mother dying?

He had never been officially told that his mother was dying. He had never really overheard anyone else talking about it. It was just something that he had come to know, as sure of it as he was that night followed day. Perhaps it was the steady way she had declined since early spring. Or the way his father had become even more taciturn than usual. Or the look on Dr. Masters' face each time he came to visit. Whatever it was, he knew with certainty that his mother was dying. He fought to control the knot that clenched in his stomach as he thought the unthinkable thought. What would happen to him when she was dead?

He wasn't sure what she was dying from. There was whispered talk of cancer. But he wasn't sure what that was. Whatever it was had started three months ago, in early April, when his mother had fainted while hanging out the clothes.

Indiana had been playing nearby and thought at first that his mother had tripped or something. He looked at her in mild concern, waiting for her to get back up. When she didn't move after a few moments, Indiana's concern changed to alarm. He had gone over to her and shook her. It took several more moments, but she had awakened, dragging herself to a sitting position. She had sat there dazedly for a moment before pitching forward and vomiting violently on the ground. Indiana watched in horror, backing away from her and the mess. He had never seen her sick before. It frightened him. When the vomiting was over, Rebecca leaned back on her hands wearily. She tried to get up, but was unable to. She had looked at her son in concern.

"Indiana, please go get your father."

Indy had stared at her mutely, even more scared by what she had said. She never disturbed his father at work, not even for the most serious reasons. She had always said that he should never be bothered at work; he could worry about life's little problems at home.

"Please, sweetheart. Go bring your father home."

Indiana had gasped as if struck by a fist and then broke in to a run. Rockbridge College was not far, less than a mile, and Indy did not stop running until he got there. He entered the main building and clattered noisily down the empty, tiled hallway to his father's classroom. He had not hesitated even a moment as he pushed the door open and cried out, "Dad!"

He remembered vividly the angry expression on his father's face as the professor whirled and glared at the small boy in the doorway. Indy went mute, staring in to his father's furious glare. He vividly recalled the astonished looks on the faces of the students and the intense mortification that he had felt.

"What the devil do you want, Junior?" his father had demanded angrily.

Indy had stood there for several moments, panting in exhaustion and fear, his mouth moving in unvoiced words. It was a moment he was sure he would never forget. He watched numbly as Henry marched toward him and grabbed him roughly by the shoulder and pushed him into the hall.

"What's the matter with you, boy?"

Indy suddenly found his voice. "It's Mom! She's sick!"

And then an astonishing thing had happened. His father's eyes had widened, ever-so-slightly, and his lips tightened into a straight line. "Jesus Christ," he whispered as he leapt to his feet and ran down the hall toward the door.

Indy had stood there in amazement at the unprecedented swearing from his father as he watched the retreating back. He had slowly started walking after him, but as he reached the door he broke in to a dead run. Something, he suddenly realized, was terribly wrong. And he had a gut feeling that it would never be right again.

It was dark before Indiana returned home that evening, long after the doctor would be gone. He had wandered around the hills aimlessly for hours, picking up Indian arrowheads, digging up shards of prettily painted pottery with pointed sticks. He liked his little discoveries, putting his treasures into his pockets to be thoroughly examined and enjoyed later when he got home. It was a pastime that helped him forget what was happening there.

As Indiana trekked through the large lot in the back, he noticed that the house was still dark. He frowned a little. Usually by now his father had lit a couple of lamps in the living room and always one in his mother's room. The whole house remained dark. Indy deliberately slowed his walk, trying to think of some explanation for the lack of light. His father could be very forgetful at times. Yes, that must be it. He had just forgotten. Indy climbed the steps to the porch and quietly entered the back door. The house was very quiet. Even Indiana, the dog, did not patter forth to greet him.

Indy crept through the kitchen, the hairs on his neck standing on end. He walked slowly down the hallway to the door of the still-dark living room and looked in. He caught his breath as he saw his father sitting alone in the darkness in his easy chair. From the faint light from the window, Indiana could see that his father's eyes were open and staring straight ahead. The soft moonlight glittered in the dark eyes.

Indiana swallowed hard, but could not force himself to move. "Dad?"

At first there was no response, but then the two glittering orbs turned toward him. "Come here, Junior." The voice held less than its usual stern tone, something was different. What was it?

Indy walked toward his father slowly. As he neared, he could see his father's face more clearly, and he was more frightened than ever by what he saw. He had never seen any weakness in his father. He had assumed that it just didn't exist. Now there was a vulnerability in that strong, dark face that didn't belong there. Indy had an impulse to slap that look away. He didn't, of course. He just stared, wide-eyed.

Henry cleared his throat. "I didn't know where you were. I supposed you were out in the hills, but I knew I wouldn't be able to find you."

It was not a rebuke. His father had always allowed him a great deal of freedom, trusting in Indy's common sense to keep him out of trouble. Indy had been exploring those hills for years. He had been staying out after dark since last summer.

"She died about two hours ago."

Indy simply stood and stared at his father mutely.

"I'm sorry, son."

The glittering eyes turned back toward the window. "I've asked Dr. Masters to help me with the funeral arrangements. I'm not very good at that sort of thing."

Indiana could feel the tears stinging at his eyes, but he blinked them back furiously, grateful for the dark so that his father could not see. If his father would not cry, neither would he. He wanted desperately to climb into that strong lap and draw comfort from those strong arms, but knew that his father would not tolerate the intimacy.

"You'd better get some sleep, Junior. Tomorrow will be a busy day."

Indy didn't move for a moment, still staring bleakly at the profile in the dimness. Henry continued to stare into the dark, blinking more than usual, but he remained quiet and somber. He seemed totally oblivious to Indiana's presence now that he had dismissed him. Indy trembled in the darkness, but did not move.

After a few minutes, Henry suddenly stood and walked a few paces toward the hall. He seemed to notice Indy for the first time. "Are you still here? You really should get some sleep." The stern tone was back.

Indy nodded, although he knew that his father probably could not see him. "Yes, sir."

Henry turned and continued walking down the hall. Indy padded quietly behind, not wishing to give up his father's presence just yet. When Henry stopped in front of Rebecca's sickroom, Indy stopped short and watched with horror as his father opened the door.

Henry paused in the doorway, looking into the room. Even though he was a few steps down the hall, Indiana found he could also see into the room. It was extremely dark, and he could barely see the still figure on the bed. A shock ran down his spine as he realized that he was looking at his mother's dead body. His eyes widened as he watched his father enter the room and shut the door behind him.

Indy suddenly felt a terror like he had never known before. He crushed himself against the closed door as if he could be with his father through the thickness of the wood. The panic made the barely controlled tears rise, and he felt them as they streamed down his face. His mother was dead! He would never see her again. And in the stark reality of that revelation, he sank to the floor at the foot of the door and hugged the frame pitifully. He made no attempt to stop the flow of tears. In retrospect, he wasn't sure how long he sat there like that, but it was a very long time, an eternity of sorrow and fear. He didn't remember falling asleep, but when he awoke the next morning, he was sleeping in his own bed, the covers carefully tucked in around him.

Henry jerked the Model T to a stop in front of the house. Indy got out of the car and started to walk quickly up the walk. The sooner he got out of these clothes, the better. The starched white collar of his dress shirt had dug into his neck during the entire funeral. Even afterwards, at the church, he had been chastised roughly by his father when he tried the loosen the collar. Indy had thought it strange, but nice, that the women in the church had prepared a feast for the mourners and had solicitously stuffed Indy and his father with food all afternoon. He had responded shyly to all their hugs and weepy condolences, sticking close to this father's side most of the day.

As Indy reached the porch, he realized that his father was not behind him, and he turned around to look at the car. Henry still sat in the vehicle, his hands on the steering wheel, his eyes gazing off into the distance.

"Dad?"

His father turned to look at him.

"Aren't you coming in?"

Henry looked at him blankly for a moment before suddenly starting as if coming out of a dream. He got out of the car and followed Indy into the house. Indy ran immediately for his bedroom and changed out of his "Sunday-go-to-meeting" clothes and into his comfortable shorts and shirt. He didn't even bother putting on shoes.

He padded out of his room and down the hall to the kitchen where his father sat at the table. Indy's eyes widened in surprise as he saw the mounds of food that covered the table; presents, no doubt, from concerned neighbors.

Henry looked up at him and smiled wryly. "The ladies must think they're feeding an army instead of just the two of us."

Indy nodded in agreement as he looked at the different dishes, which included a whole baked chicken.

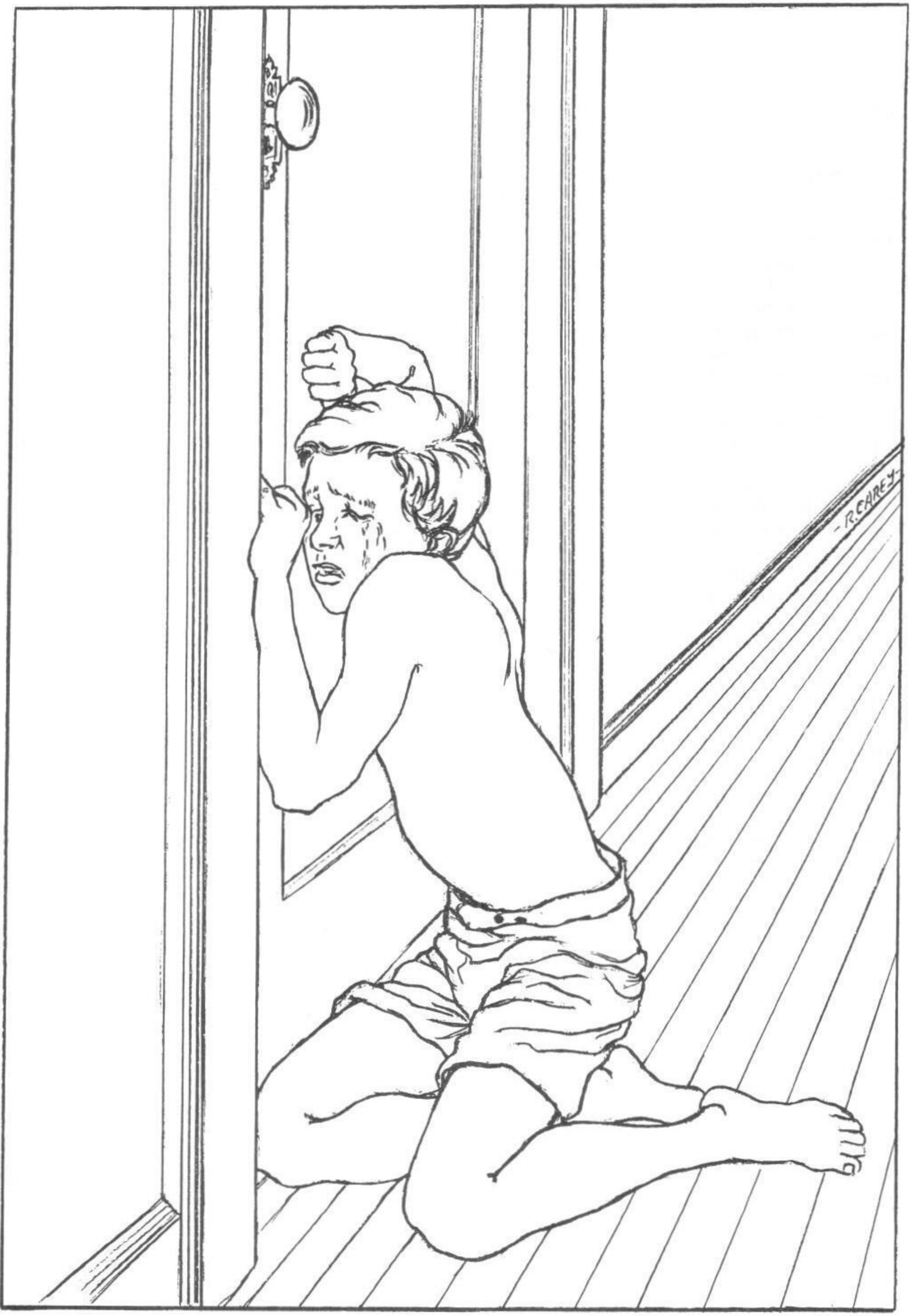
Henry ran a weary hand down his face and said, "I don't know what we're going to do with all of it. We certainly don't have enough room in the icebox for even half of it. I don't know about you, but I'm so well filled from dinner that I couldn't eat anything else today."

"Me, either. Why'd they bring so much?"

Henry shrugged. "They're only trying to be nice. They all loved your mother very much."

Indy accepted the explanation and sat down across the table. He peeked inside the covered dishes, marveling at how the various aromas could still make his mouth water even though his stomach was full. It seemed very strange to see his father here on a weekday. These and other idle thoughts flitted through his mind for several minutes until he looked up to see his father staring at him. He returned the look questioningly.

Henry drew in a breath after a moment. "You know, I never really noticed before just how much you look like your mother."


-R.CAREY-

Indy didn't say anything, but he felt suddenly disturbed by his father's gaze.

"We didn't have enough time," Henry said distractedly.

"Who?"

Henry did not answer. He got up and began storing the food. Indy rose to help him and soon the table was cleared. Indy worked silently beside his father, curious about the older man's preoccupied mood, but understanding from years of experience that he should not pry. Unlike Indiana's mother, Henry Jones was a very private man, hard to know, and certainly not given to voicing his feelings. Indy remembered warmly how his mother would let him climb into her lap and snuggle into her arms, even after he got too big to fit comfortably there. She would laugh, hold him tightly, and tell him that he was crushing her legs. His father, on the other hand, had abruptly stopped allowing him access to his lap when Indy started school. The elder Jones had announced sternly that if he were old enough to go to school, he was too old to be treated as a baby. And from that time forward, Indy did not remember any instance when his father had physically demonstrated his love. But there were those dim memories of warm hugs, silly games, and fond tickling.

When the kitchen chores were finished, they went into the living room, and Henry lit the lamps as dusk settled over the house. Indy grabbed a favorite book off the shelf and laid down on the floor to read it. His dog crept out of the corner and curled himself next to his master's legs. Henry also picked up a half-finished book and settled back into his easy chair. Neither of them said anything, and as the sky outside blackened and the neighbors retreated into their own homes, a silence settled over the little house. The only sound that could be heard was the steady ticking of the mantel clock.

Indy tried to concentrate on his book, a normally interesting volume about dinosaurs and the paleontological search for their remains. But as the evening ticked slowly forward, he grew more and more restless. He had found himself reading the same material over and over, and he finally conceded with a sigh that his heart was really not in it. He ruffled the dog's fur and attempted to goad the family pet into a bit of playful wrestling. But Indiana, the dog, was not in the mood and trotted from the room to the relative safety of the hall. Indy got up and replaced the book on the shelf. He was bored, and he knew that the best thing to do was to go to bed. But something within kept him from making the decision to walk down that hall, past the empty death room, to his own room. Perhaps he could persuade his father to play a game of chess.

Indiana turned toward the easy chair, ready to voice his request but the words died on his lips. Across the room, Henry sat in his usual place, the book he had been reading sitting idly on his lap. Even from this distance, Indiana could see the brightness in his father's eyes and the trails of moisture that ran down his cheeks into the dark beard. The heavy brows were furrowed into an anguished frown and the shoulders shook slightly.

Indiana stood there in shock. His father was crying! Somehow that sight was more monumental than his mother's death. He swallowed and realized that his mouth had gone dry. He cleared his throat.

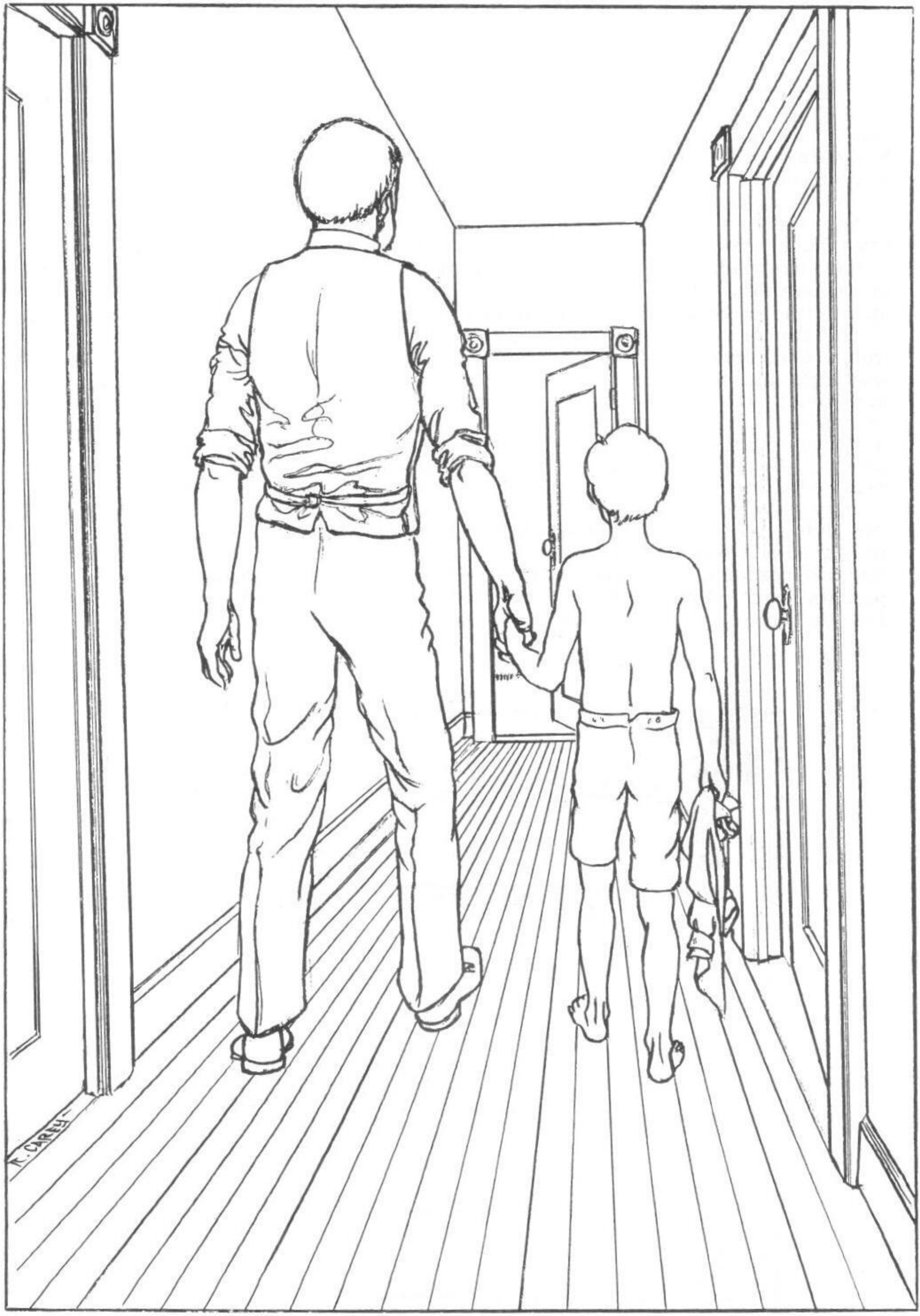
"Dad?" he asked tentatively.

Henry didn't answer, but the crying did not stop. He turned his face slightly away from his son's view.

Indy stepped hesitantly forward, not sure of how to deal with this strange new event. He stood next to the chair, fighting his own tears.

"Dad?"

His father suddenly turned and looked up at him, his face flushed with tears


R. CAREY

and long-suppressed emotion. He seemed incapable of further action.

Indy reached out and touched the trembling shoulder in comfort. At the touch, Henry reached out, and, grabbing Indy's arm, pulled his son roughly to him in a back-breaking embrace that Indy would not have dreamed of pulling away from.

"My God, Junior. She's gone. What shall we do? What shall we do?"

And then he buried his head in his son's shoulder and wept openly, the wrenching sobs sounding harsh in Indiana's ear.

Indy wrapped his arms around his father's broad shoulders and clung to him in desperation. He knew that he was crying himself, but his own weeping was lost in the wonderment of his father's tears.

The two of them stayed that way for several minutes, neither saying anything, both understanding that they didn't have to. The sobs turned into soft weeping, and the salty tears dried on their cheeks. Eventually, they were both quiet, still locked in the embrace, as if afraid to let go would mean losing the other.

Henry was the first to pull back, his hands still clasped on Indy's shoulders firmly. He gazed at his son for several moments, his face unreadable but calm. He then smiled tightly and stood up, holding out a hand to the boy.

Indy grasped the proffered hand and followed docilely as Henry blew out the two living room lamps. They walked down the hall, past the sickroom, past Indy's room, to the master bedroom. Indy slept next to his father that night, huddled comfortingly against him. He had never been allowed to sleep in his parents' bed before, and he knew that he would never be allowed to again. But the one night was enough. Indiana slept peacefully.

Little Treasures

by

Karen Estabrook

Shadows accompanying the dying sun's rays loomed before him in the upstairs hallway. Though he knew the place by heart, it seemed so foreign as he allowed the stiff new black shoes to carry him slowly forward. He could hear the floorboards creak above the nervous, morose voices below, but none of it mattered or even filtered through to his sullen mind.

He stopped before a door, **the** door--not wanting to see it, yet drawn helplessly as if it were the papers and diary that so often claimed his father. And his fingers reached toward the knob, Indiana Jones was reminded how small his hands were compared to his dad's. During the service as they sat in the front pew, he'd watched Henry's fingers--how the left would slowly rub the right, or the right the left, or how they'd lace with each other, calmly, tightly, the pink draining to white almost magically. Then the process would begin again, and Indiana had been able finally to predict within seconds how long each step would last. And he'd continued to watch, briefly comforted that at least one thing remained constant--and welcoming the chance to look at something other than the coffin holding his mother.

In front of them, the minister had talked endlessly about God's will and how God would comfort the family and how God had called Mary Jones home. Well, as far as the young boy was concerned, God could stuff His will. Mary Jones belonged here--in this house, in this room, with her family. No comfort God could offer would ever replace hers.

He turned the doorknob and crept inside. And for a moment she was there, tossing away the duster, flashing that beckoning smile, and saying, "Hello, Indy. Come show me what you've found today." Proudly, he trotted quickly to her side, and they sat on the bed, examining the precious stones he'd found along the railroad tracks, precious stones he'd brought for her to add to the ever-growing collection he was sure she kept somewhere.

Leaving the door ajar, he stepped further into the pre-dusk-gray room, now seeing her in the bed, lying weakly against the pillows, her eyes hollowed, her smile frail. The softer, fragile voice had breathed, "Hello, Indy. Come closer, my little one. Come sit with me a while." And he'd carefully climbed beside her, resting his head against her shoulder as he told her of his day's explorations or of his exam scores at school.

He found himself at the foot of the bed, clutching the cold, wood bar of the footboard, staring again at the stilled, stone-white face, so quiet, so distant. His father--finally home from somewhere--standing over her muttering, "I didn't know. I didn't know" to Mrs. Rahr the nurse neighbor. And then he'd turned and found Indy and said--

"Junior? What are you doing in here?"

Indy spun to find his father behind him in the doorway. Henry Jones's face beneath the brown beard and horn-rimmed glasses was shocked and hard.

"D-Dad--I--"

"Junior, you're supposed to be downstairs. We have guests, and we will not ignore them. I want you down there."

Indiana stared, and his lips pressed tighter, quivering against each other. He wanted his father to tell him it was all a nightmare or that maybe his mother was in some city which had one of those libraries Henry liked so much. She was waiting there for them. Maybe they'd be leaving Utah. She'd always talked of her home in Connecticut and of her parents who'd never visited Utah--not even for . . . this day. Maybe she was with them now, and he wanted his father to say so.

"Junior? Are you coming?"

"I don't wanna go down there," Indy protested quietly. "I don't know why they're here. I don't know them."

"Well, of course you do, boy. I introduced them to you. They're professors--people your mother and I know--" His voice cracked, and he turned to the side, hidden by encroaching shadows. "I thought I told you not to come in here."

Through mutual need, Indiana reacted to the huskiness of his father's voice and ran to the man, wrapping his short arms about Henry's hips, expecting this parent to drop to his knees and envelop him in a long hug--as his mother would have done. But there was nothing but a slight rustling of his hair, and he couldn't tell if it had been caused by his father's hand or the afternoon's cooling breeze.

"The women have brought some food so we and our guests can have a meal together."

Through tear-blurred eyes, Indiana looked up to his father's face. Perhaps there was grief there. Maybe compassion. But the boy was only sure of the rock-solid set of the jaw, the familiar strictness in the eyes as his father pried him loose.

"Don't cry, boy. There's no purpose in it. It won't bring her back. I thought you were made of better stuff than this. Now I see I am sorely disappointed."

"Dad--" Sobs burst from the boy's throat, and he again tried to embrace his father.

But Henry sidestepped him. "This is intolerable. We are going downstairs now, and you will stay there--"

"I want to take this off!" Indy cried, angrily indicating the new black suit and tie his father had bought yesterday.

"You'll do no such thing," Henry told him, his eyes piercing his son's. "You're a man now. Men wear suits. Men wear ties. We're to have dinner; you'll dress appropriately."

"I'm not hungry!" Indy started to push past his father, having felt nothing but nausea in the previous days. He wanted to escape to his room, to close the door on everything, to be with his other friend.

"No! Leave the dog in there. I don't want him menacing the guests." Henry grabbed the boy's shoulders, holding his son away from him, denying him passage to the other bedroom.

Indy sobbed and wiped his face with his sleeves.

"Use the handkerchief, Junior," Henry scolded gruffly. He pulled the cloth from his suit and handed it to his son. "Enough of this. We're going downstairs."

In the hallway, Indy heard his mother's bedroom door close, and from his own room he heard Indiana, his half-grown malamute, whimpering to be let loose. He felt his father's hands on his shoulders, half-pushing, half-guiding him toward the stairway. And he gulped back his tears and erupting breaths, terrified that his beloved, tender mother was definitely gone--never to return. Nothing would ever be the same. Nothing.

At the bottom of the stairs, he stopped, horrified by all the adults--all dressed in black, some of the women even wearing veils--standing around the table, staring coldly at him. They'd been in the house since the funeral, since early afternoon, sitting on her furniture, joking as she was being buried.

In the center of the table were carnations and roses which had been brought from the church. Gone were the dandelions, buttercups, and daisies, the wildflowers he'd always brought her. There were also heaps of salads, meats, and breads. Gone were the cookies, sandwiches, and lemonade--the treats she'd always made him. These people had come to celebrate her death, to enjoy the absence of his mother.

"Junior, you remember this man. His train came in this morning--"

"How long are they all staying?" Indiana cried, panic and hatred streaking his voice. "I don't want them here. I want Mama! I want Ma--" His shouts were cut off by a cuff across his face. The blow wasn't that hard, but it caught Indy off balance, and the boy stumbled, falling against the bannister.

"Junior! This is **not** how you speak before our guests!" Henry's face was crimson, his voice shaky. "Now you'll apologize--"

Indy was on his feet quickly, though, and edging up the stairs. "Mom never hit me," he breathed coldly. All tears were gone, only surprise and deep hurt registering in his accusing eyes. "Mom never hit me." Before his father could recover, Indy returned to the upstairs hallway, running past her door, and releasing his dog. He briefly hugged his best friend, then bounded back down the stairs and out the door past the still-stunned Henry.

The sky paraded pink and orange clouds as he and Indiana chased down the railroad tracks, then across them, finally coming to a stop at the creek's edge. And the boy sat, back against a tree, panting heavily beside the water. His mouth was drawn in to a trembling frown, and his fingers rubbed at his burning eyes. Biting back the sting of tears, he reached for Indiana, cradling the dog's warm head against his neck, arms finally clutching a willing comforter. And he held the dog for what seemed ages, mumbling into its fur, "What are we gonna do, Indiana? What are we gonna do?"

But eventually, both found the embrace ungainly, and the dog lay beside the boy as the latter idly lifted stones and tossed them into the shallow, rippling stream, shattering the peaceful reflections in the water's surface.

"I should think you'd like to save some of those, Indy," came a voice from behind him. "Some might actually qualify as museum interests."

Indiana turned quickly to find a tall man with a kindly face and cheerful eyes. The face and British accent were familiar, but long-distanced.

"I'm quite certain you don't remember my name. And I'm certain that at the moment you could care less. But I've taken rather an interest in you--since the first time I saw you. You were--what?--I believe one week old then. I'm just sorry I couldn't have arrived sooner than this morning."

"Dad sent you to come find me," Indy muttered, seeing the man pull his suit coat about him in the fading sunlight.

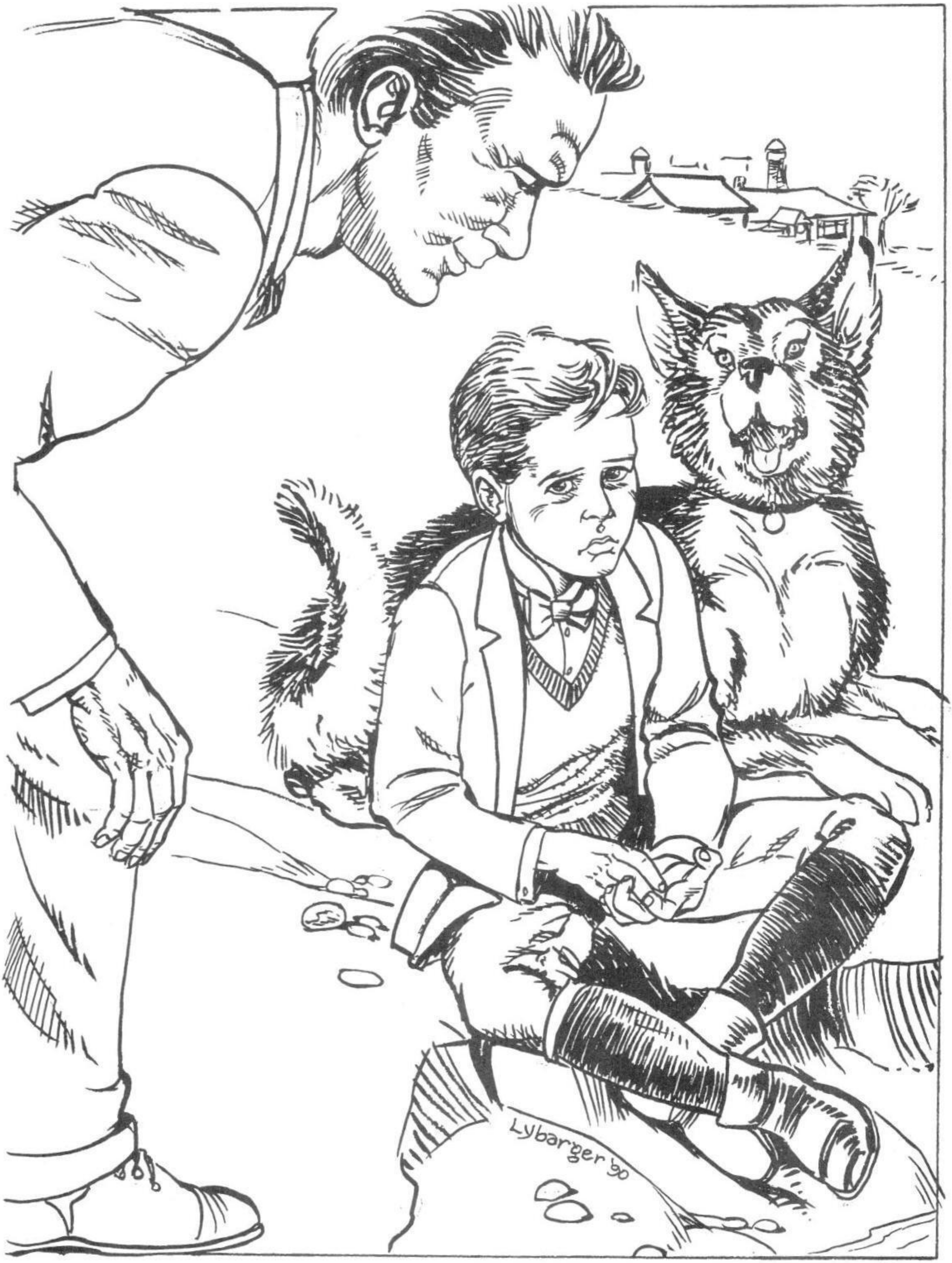
"Oh, no, he didn't," said the man. "I only wanted to leave the--gathering for a while." He moved closer to the bank and squatted. "Would you mind if I took a seat with you?"

Indiana frowned, then shook his head, and he watched the newcomer lower himself to the gravel. The man took in his surroundings; then his fingers began to glide reverently over the stones.

"I believe these are your treasures, aren't they?" he asked. "Treasures you used to take home to your mother?"

Indy's jaw dropped. "How did you--"

The man chuckled. "Oh, she wrote me all about it. Told me lots of details of your growing up. It's not easy watching your godchild grow up if you're two thousand miles away, you know."


Lybarger '90

Indy's nose wrinkled in confusion. "Your god--huh?"

"Indy, I'm your godfather. My name is Brody. Please call me Marcus. Your father and I were college roommates. I was best man at your parents' wedding, and they, for some reason, wanted me to be a part of you, too."

"Oh." Now Indy could place the man. He'd seen him, he remembered, on the few visits they'd made to Connecticut. And he'd heard both his parents mention Marcus. "Mom liked you," he finally said.

"And I liked her. Very much." Marcus smiled. "As I do your father."

Indy shifted uncomfortably, and a light breeze lifted some strands of his fresh haircut. The touch of his father's hand still stung his face. "Mom never hit me," he thought aloud.

Brody rubbed his chin and picked up a stone, turning it in his hands, still heartbroken for Henry. "Indy, your father never meant to--to slap you. I've known him for years. He would never want to hurt you." He studied the boy, saw tears brimming again, and noticed Indiana's grasped hands. "This is hard for him, too. Give him time."

Indiana no longer wanted to think of Henry, didn't want to face those hard, piercing eyes. "He hates me," the boy muttered. "He doesn't want to be with me."

Marcus turned his head and smiled sympathetically. "Someday you'll understand all this. But your father **does** love you. He just can't . . . show it. This will be a difficult adjustment for both of you, but you'll manage. Your mother would want it that way."

"Mama--" The threatening tears spilled, and Indy bent, losing his face in the fur of his dog. The malamute turned its head at the touch and panted stoically, glad to share the boy's burden.

Indy sobbed uncontrollably, feeling so alone. "What will happen, Mama?" he'd asked her on one of those last days they'd walked in the garden. She'd clutched him to her, stroking his hair with loving caresses. "It won't be so bad, sweetheart," she'd whispered. "You're my big boy. You'll be all right. You must be strong for your father, too. Watch over him, Indiana. He'll need you."

"Your mother was a dear soul," Brody was musing, smiling fondly. "Joy and love were her spirit and leapt from her in radiance. She had strength, too: the type of will and courage of which anyone would be proud--and which anyone could trust. And you must treasure those examples, keep those parts of her alive, carry them with you forever." He slid a comforting hand over the boy's hair, his fingers remaining to grip the small, bony shoulder, and he felt a final, gasping tremble.

"I'll miss her," Indiana whispered.

"Yes--always," Marcus replied. "But someday you'll see her again and be able to tell her of numerous adventures. And, until then, you must meet each day as she would--as a challenge to be met face first."

On the horizon, the orange sun suddenly peeked from beneath a cloud before it could disappear for the night. Its brightly cast ray reflected on them, and Marcus nodded as if receiving a message. "You see, Indy? There is always brightness behind the dark, always a reason to continue."

The boy sat up, running his sleeves over his moist cheeks, vowing that the last tears had been shed. How often he and his mother had watched sunsets from here when Henry had been away. He glimpsed the distant disk now, too, and swallowed hard. He wouldn't disappoint her.

Marcus saw resolve cross the child's features, saw the boy's spirit on which Mary had remarked in her letters. Yes, her strength resided in the boy, her courage and appeal. Her son would grow to be a man of character--a man to do her proud.

Indy reached for a stone--a white one illumined by the sun's last light. Lifting it, he examined its rounded edges, felt its cold surface warm to his hand. "I'd better go back now," he told Marcus. "Dad will need me." He pulled his arm back to toss the stone into the creek.

But Brody's hand gently stopped the throw. "May I have that?" he asked, indicating the stone. "Your mother was proud of your treasures. I'd like to have one, too."

Indiana's eyes met the man's, and their gazes locked for several moments. Then the boy willingly dropped the stone into Marcus' palm. "You really want it?"

"I do. And when you find more, you can send them to me."

Indy climbed to his feet and dusted off his clothing as his malamute rose. "Okay," he told Brody, adding shyly, "But you gotta tell me how you like 'em."

"I will be pleased to do that," was the reply. Marcus looked up and found the little hand offering assistance and with a smile he enveloped it and stood. "And you must take care of your father. Watch over him, Indiana; he'll need you."

A half-smile lifted the right corner of Indy's lip, and he turned toward home. "I will," he said. "Trust me."

Oatmeal Friends

by

Rebecca S. Cope

"Me?" Henry Jones looked at his wife in true perplexity.

Sarah had expected this reaction and pursed her lips to try to contain the smile that she knew would infuriate her husband. "You can certainly handle a two-year-old. Besides, it's only for two or three hours."

Henry followed his wife helplessly as she headed for the front door. "I'm sorry, Henry"--she was pulling on her gloves as she spoke--"but I have to go. I promised Grace that I'd help with the social. I can't let her down just because Mrs. Taylor is ill and can't take care of Junior."

"But I have work to do!" Henry protested. His Scottish accent always got stronger when he was upset, and the burr was now very pronounced. "Can't one of the other neighbors take care of him?"

Sarah paused at the door. "Everyone else will be at the social," she admonished gently. "If you'd go with me, Junior could play with the other children."

"I hate socials," he said pettishly. "They're a waste of time."

Sarah knew full well Henry's views on afternoon socials. In their short marriage, she had never been able to persuade her young husband to attend one. Henry preferred the happy solitude of his studies to making polite chatter with men and women from the church. "Then I don't see any solution to our dilemma but for you to take care of Junior for a while." She couldn't help but smile as Henry's lower lip protruded in a sulk. She stood up on tiptoe and kissed him sweetly. "I have ultimate faith in you, Henry. You can do anything you put your mind to."

Henry softened a little. "I suppose I can work on my paper later."

Sarah smiled again and opened the door. "Exactly."

Henry fingered his beard as he thought, **I really should spend more time with the boy . . .**

A crash from the rear of the house sounded loudly, and the angry wail of a toddler even louder. Both Henry and Sarah turned toward the noise in concern.

From down the hall, a young child padded quickly toward them, clad only in diapers. "Broken!" the boy cried. "Broken!"

Sarah hastily stepped out the door before Henry could turn the unknown problem over to her. "Be sure to feed him lunch!" she called over her shoulder as she pulled the door shut behind her.

Henry started to follow his wife out, but sighed and removed his hand from the doorknob. He turned and looked down at his son as the toddler gazed up at him with wet cheeks and an unhappy expression. Henry squared his shoulders. How hard could taking care of a child be?

"Broken!" Junior repeated.

His father grunted sternly. "Stop crying and tell me what's broken."

"Broken! Broken!" was all Junior could reply.

Henry rolled his eyes. He'd be happy when the child could communicate better. It was always a chore to figure out what he was trying to say. He picked Junior up and carried him down the hall to the kitchen where the boy and the crash had come from. As he had expected, there was a shattered sugar bowl on the floor near the table. Junior had obviously pulled it off.

"Broken!" the boy wailed.

"Really?" Henry said dryly. He put the child on one of the chairs and grabbed the broom. "I thought your mother told you to stay away from the sugar bowl."

As he swept the mess out the back door onto the porch, he glanced back at the chair where he had placed Junior and frowned when he saw that the child had disappeared.

"For heaven's sake. **Now** where did he go?"

Then he heard the dog, Indiana, yelp and the shrill laughter of Junior. Henry ran down the hall to the living room in time to rescue the family dog from having his tail pulled again. Henry took Junior by the arm and hauled him away as the gentle malamute slunk behind the couch to avoid further harm. Junior, of course, cried at being thwarted in his torture of the dog.

"Stop that!" Henry said sharply. "Leave the poor dog alone." He picked the boy up and placed him on the couch. "Now sit there and behave yourself!" he scolded.

Henry Jr. looked at him with large, innocent eyes. "I want doggie."

"Not until you can treat him better. Now you just sit there."

Junior stared at him uncomprehendingly, but didn't move. Henry nodded in satisfaction and reached for a book from the living room's huge bookcase. He sat down in his easy chair, putting the book on his lap. He had read only a few lines when he heard the tiny voice from the couch. "I want doggie."

Henry looked up, irritated. "No!" he responded sharply.

Junior thrust his lower lip out. "Doggie?"

"I told you, no!"

The pout turned into tears. "I want Mommy!"

That was too much for Henry. He slammed the book down on the table next to him. "Well, Mommy isn't here, is she?"

He watched in exasperation, mingled with fascination, as Junior's face screwed up and turned red. A shrill whine emerged that increased in pitch until it was almost inaudible. The child flung himself sideways in defiant temper, and the whine ended with a loud gasp for air. Then the crying began in earnest.

Henry looked at him helplessly. "What **is** your problem?"

"Mommy!" Junior bawled between sobs. "I want Mommy!"

Henry unconsciously rubbed his temple where the first stirring of a headache was starting. He knew that Junior was capable of some deafening crying, but he had always relied on Sarah to quiet him. And somehow she always did.

"Mommy!"

"Mommy went to the church. She's not here," he repeated dully.

"Mommy!"

Henry stood up angrily. No child was going to get the best of him. He loomed over the couch in his most imposing stance, hands on hips, and glared at Junior. "You stop this nonsense right now, young man. I will have no more of it!"

The crying seemed to increase in intensity.

Henry raised a hand threateningly. "I'll give you something to cry about!"

Junior merely rubbed the snot from his nose across one cheek and continued his unabated blubbering.

Henry made a face at the nauseating string of mucous and sagged. "Oh, for God's sake, Junior. Wipe your nose." He pulled a handkerchief from his hip pocket and used it daub at the child's face. It didn't do much good, and he was chagrined when Junior buried his face against his leg and wiped the remaining tears and snot on his father's trousers.

"Oh, Junior." Henry looked down at the shiny spot in distaste. He left the toddler sitting on the couch and went to the kitchen to wash off the offending mess. He was irritably aware that the crying child had followed him into the kitchen. He used the pump to splash some water into the sink and gingerly wiped at the stain with a dishcloth.

Junior had stopped crying as he watched the process, his breathing punctuated by the short gasps of a child trying to recover from a crying bout. "Water." Junior grabbed a chair and pushed it noisily over to the sink. He climbed up and watched. "Water," he announced again.

"Yes, water," Henry repeated absently. He leaned over and scrubbed at the spot and was even more distressed at the huge wet stain that covered nearly one thigh. Now he'd have to change his clothes. He couldn't go around in wet--

He heard a splash and a thud. He straightened up and was alarmed to see his son lying headfirst in the sink. "Junior!" He grabbed both legs and yanked the boy out of the water. "Junior, are you all right?"

He quickly righted the child and hugged him to him as he listened to young Junior sputter and cough. Henry examined his face closely to assure himself that the child was fine. Just wet. No harm done.

Junior began crying again, this time out of fear and surprise. He wrapped his little arms around Henry's neck and wailed in his father's ear.

"There, there, don't cry. You're all right." Henry found himself unconsciously crooning the reassurances and patting the child on the back. Junior's cries abated quickly, and he snuffled against Henry's neck, hanging on tightly.

Henry rocked him gently for a few more minutes until the noises completely stopped. Then he started to put his son back down on the floor. His nostrils twitched as he caught a whiff of the odor, and he straightened again. He lifted the toddler's bottom and sniffed cautiously.

"Oh, Junior!" he groaned, wrinkling his nose in distaste. "Please tell me you didn't."

But the boy just gazed up at his father with clear, guileless eyes.

Henry sighed. He placed Junior on the chair and carefully reached around and pulled the diaper out a little. It was there. Brown and foul-smelling. Henry ground his teeth as he cursed his wife under his breath, creatively using French and Latin to vent his anger.

He'd told Sarah that the boy should have been out of diapers by now. It was disgraceful. Why, in Scotland all children were trained long before this. But he had indulged Sarah as she indulged their only child. However, none of this was going to help him with the soiled diaper.

He put his son on the kitchen table. Struggling with the safety pins, he only managed to stick himself once before both were removed. He opened up the diaper and winced.

"This is intolerable!"

He slipped the soiled cloth out from under Junior, being sure not to get any of the mess on himself. He held the garment by two fingers of each hand and went to the backdoor. God, it smelled horrible. He looked around, but had no idea of what to do with a dirty diaper. He finally tossed the mess out into the backyard.

Now what had he seen his wife do? Oh, yes. A new diaper and some powder. He went into the nursery and retrieved a clean diaper and the can of talc from the dresser.

When he got back to the kitchen, Henry stared at his son in disbelief. "Jesus Christ!" he gasped in spite of himself. "What have you **done?**"

Henry Jr. looked up at his father in surprise. He was still sitting on the table, but he hadn't been still. He had somehow managed to get both his hands full of feces and was experimentally rubbing it all over his stomach, his face, and the table.

Henry threw the diaper and talc down angrily and charged toward the table. He picked Junior up, realizing belatedly that that was probably not a good idea. He looked down at his sleeves. The horrible mess had now been transferred to him. He looked around desperately, trying to figure out what to do with a shit-covered child. He finally put Junior in the sink.

"Now just stand there!" he yelled at the bewildered child. Junior didn't move.

Henry wiped ineffectively at the table with a dishtowel, only managing to smear the stuff evenly over the surface. When he was done, he threw the dishtowel out the backdoor to accompany the diaper. He then turned his attention to Junior. He grasped the pump handle and began pumping cold water into the basin. Junior howled as the water hit his backside and tried to worm his way out of the sink. Henry held him down.

"Sit still, you little nuisance! I can't clean you off if you jump around! Sit still!"

"Cold! Cold!" Junior's cries vied with Henry's swearing as the two struggled at the sink.

When he was finally convinced that his child was clean, Henry left him in the emptying basin and went to find a towel. When he returned, Junior was gone. Again.

Only this time, telltale little wet footprints led Henry to Junior's nursery where the boy was trying to hide under the bed. Henry grabbed his feet and pulled the wet and screaming child out.

"Oh, no, you don't!" He quickly wrapped the kicking boy in the towel and carried him unceremoniously back to the kitchen where the clean diaper and talc were. He set him on the floor and dropped down on his knees next to him. Junior started to squirm away, but was, for once, quieted by a threatening look from his father.

The diaper was obviously the wrong size, Henry lamented as he struggled to wrap the white cloth around his son. After several tries and several methods of folding it, Henry finally came close to something that looked right and quickly pinned it in to place. He finally let Junior up and was not unhappy when the child went scampering off to his nursery.

Henry got up wearily and looked down at himself in disgust. He was now messier than Junior. He went to his bedroom and quickly discarded his soiled clothes. He had had only enough time to put on a pair of pants when he heard the rattle of pots and pans in the kitchen. He didn't think anything of it at first--until he remembered Sarah wasn't home.

His eyes widened. "Junior!"

Henry raced down the hall to kitchen. Junior had opened one of the lower cabinet doors and was dragging pots and pans out onto the floor. Henry rolled his eyes. "Get out of there, would you?" He stepped forward and grabbed the pot out of the toddler's hand.

"Hungry!"

Henry sighed. Didn't this child ever talk in anything but exclamation points?

"Hungry, hungry, hungry!" came the chant.

Henry reached for his pocket watch, but realized it was still in his other clothes. Well, it was probably lunchtime, anyway.

He looked in the pantry and frowned. He didn't know much about cooking.

Everything he saw he had no idea how to prepare. He certainly couldn't fry any meat. What could he give the boy? His eyes fell on the box of rolled oats, and he reached for it in relief. He could certainly boil water. How hard could making oatmeal be?

"What about some oatmeal?"

Junior wrinkled his nose. "I don't like it," he whined.

Henry ignored him and grabbed a pot from the floor. "I don't care. It's all I know how to cook."

He opened the box of oatmeal and dumped some into the pot. He then set the pot under the spout and pumped some water into it. There, that looked about right. He put the pot on the wood-burning stove and raised the lid. He got the fire started and blazing, nodding his head in satisfaction as he saw the bubbles forming on the sides of the pan.

While he waited for the oatmeal to boil, Henry got out a bowl and spoon. He started to put them on the table, but realized that he hadn't got it quite clean from the diaper mess. He shrugged and put the utensils on the sideboard. He'd just feed Junior in the living room. If he were careful there'd be no problem.

As Henry busied himself with his task, Junior once again wandered from the kitchen.

Henry wasn't quite sure this new noise was anything worth paying attention to at first. He couldn't precisely recognize the dull thumps. They didn't sound bad, but . . .

"Junior?"

As he walked toward the sound, he realized it was coming from the living room. "Junior?"

Thump. Thump. Thump.

Henry rounded the door in time to see his son methodically pulling each book off of the bookshelf one by one. Thump. Thump. Thump.

"JUNIOR!" he roared in his loudest voice.

The boy jumped in fear and backed off into a corner. He waited with a look of apprehension in his eyes as he watched his father stand over the pile of books.

Henry was so angry he found he couldn't even speak for a moment. His books! Junior had got into his books! He leaned over and picked up two of them, and his heart lurched. Both were valuable Greek texts.

Henry waved the two books at his son and sputtered in his wrath. "My books! You could have ruined them! You should never--! You--! I don't ever--!"

Junior looked up at him fearfully.

Henry began to calm down and backed away from the mess. Maybe it was his fault for leaving the books within Junior's reach, but why couldn't the child let things alone? He sat down on the couch and ran one hand tiredly through his hair. "Junior, what do you have to say for yourself?"

Junior regarded him uncertainly and began to sidle out of the corner. He pointed toward the kitchen. "Hungry?"

Henry sagged. "Hungry. Is that all you--" He suddenly remembered the oatmeal.

"Ohmygod!" He shot off the couch, flinging his two precious books to the floor. He could smell the scorching as he ran down the hall.

When he got to the kitchen, smoke was already beginning to pour from around the bottom of the pan. The oatmeal had boiled over and was rapidly turning to carbon on the hot metal. He grabbed the pot handle to wrench it off the stove, but howled as the metal singed his palm.

He danced around the kitchen in pain for a moment before he was able to think clearly enough to douse his hand under the pump. It helped a little. But the oatmeal was still burning. Henry quickly grabbed a dishtowel and wrapped it around the pan's handle. He was finally able to move the overflowing pot onto a cooler section of the stove.

He sat back in a chair next to the hall door, nursing his injured hand, wondering what had gone wrong and what would go wrong next.

Junior padded into the kitchen. "Hungry."

Henry slowly turned his head and gazed at his son with a look that would have made most grown men crawl off and hide. Junior only smiled brightly.

After a few moments, Henry got up and retrieved the bowl and spoon from the sideboard. He went over to the stove and reached into the pot with the spoon. It was a little thicker than when Sarah made it. He dumped a glob into the bowl. And it was lumpy, too. Oh, well. A minor detail. He doctored it with milk, sugar, and butter, and stirred the concoction messily.

He held it out to Junior proudly. "Here you go, boy. Oatmeal."

Junior sniffed suspiciously at the bowl. He looked back up at Henry. "I don't like it."

Henry bristled. "You haven't even tasted it. How could you possibly know if you don't like it?"

"Don't like it."

"Eat it anyway," Henry said through clenched teeth. He grabbed Junior's hand and dragged him down the hallway to the living room. He set the bowl on the end table and put the spoon in Junior's hand. "Now you wanted it, so eat it!"

Junior shook his head and threw the spoon down. "No."

Henry would have rolled up his sleeves if he'd been wearing a shirt, but instead he placed his hands on his hips. "Don't give me an argument!"

"Don't like it!"

Henry picked up the spoon and replaced it in the child's hand. "Eat!"

"No!"

"I said, eat!"

"No!"

Henry wrapped his hand around Junior's and forced the spoon into the bowl. It came out with a glob of oatmeal. "Eat it!"

Junior defiantly cast the spoonful on the floor.

Henry set his jaw tightly, got down on his knees, and repeated the action with the spoon in the bowl. Another glob wound up on the carpet.

Henry grabbed the spoon away and retrieved another spoonful, holding it to Junior's face. Junior resisted. Henry tried to force the stuff into his tightly closed mouth. Junior shoved his father's hand away, pushing the spoon and its contents all over Henry's chest. Henry looked down at the gummy oatmeal as it glistened in his chest hairs.

Junior laughed.

Henry would look back on it later and wonder at his own actions, but at that moment all he could do was pick up the bowl and deliberately turn it over the child's head.

Junior looked up at him, shocked.

"Nobody gets the best of me, you little shit!"

Junior suddenly grinned broadly. "Again!" he demanded happily.

Sarah walked up the dusty road tiredly. She knew she should hurry. It was almost six o'clock, much later than she had planned to come home, but Grace had desperately needed the extra help to clean up, and she simply couldn't refuse. She had gotten a ride home with one of the neighbors who lived about a quarter of a mile behind the Jones home. It wasn't a bad walk, just dusty and hot. When she got to her own property, she took a shortcut through the yard toward the back porch. The grass was in need of cutting, she saw, as she made her way through the weeds. Henry wasn't very good at keeping up with the yardwork.

She glanced down at something white laying to one side of the walk. What on earth? She bent down. It was a diaper! And a soiled one at that! She frowned angrily. Couldn't that academic husband of hers figure out what to do with a dirty diaper? She trudged up the back steps and put the diaper in a barrel of soapy water that she kept for the need. As she started to open the door, she noticed the broken sugar bowl and its contents. A deep foreboding hit her as she entered the house.

She went from room to room, so shocked by the mess that she didn't have time to be angry. The stove was filthy. The table was horrible. The living room was covered with oatmeal! There were books all over the floor. Couldn't Henry control a little two-year-old?

But that thought brought her to the present. Just where were her incompetent husband and her mischievous son? She took off her hat and gloves and put them on the front hall table. "Henry?" she called. She checked the nursery, but they weren't there. She checked Henry's study. Not there, either.

"Henry?"

She opened the door to the master bedroom and stopped in midstride.

The bed was empty, but on the floor, on a pile of blankets, lay her two "men." Henry was clothed only in his trousers, and she could see that his beard and chest were covered with oatmeal. Next to him, lying snuggled in his arms, lay the boy, a matching muddle of oatmeal. They were sleeping soundly, Henry snoring slightly, Junior sucking his thumb.

Sarah almost woke them, but shook her head in defeat. What would be the use? She closed the door behind her softly.

But as she went about cleaning the house, she began to smile to herself warmly. Maybe she should leave them alone more often. It would be good for them--if not for her or the house.

* * *

There once was a Barnett co-ed
Who wanted Jones, Junior in bed;
Though she wheedled and pleaded,
She never succeeded,
So she bedded Jones, Senior instead!

--Irina Ozernoy

Illumination

by

Carolyn Golledge

(With thanks to Karen Estabrook for valued assistance)

Indiana Jones had not been joking about Marcus Brody's ability to lose his way even in his own museum. Thus, not wanting to spend weeks wandering the desert, he had quickly caught up to his old friend, slowed his horse, and redirected traffic as Henry and Sallah joined them. They rode for a time directly into the setting sun, Indiana and Sallah leading the way toward an oasis where they could comfortably pass the night and rest and water the horses. Indiana had never felt better in his life--the water from the Grail had done more than just erase all evidence of his struggle with the Nazi tank. He was sure his father felt the same way, and both could have easily ridden all night. But the horses wouldn't last, and, while Sallah was tougher and fitter than he looked, they were all concerned for Marcus who was showing signs of the stress and exhaustion he'd endured as a prisoner of the Germans.

So it was that the tall date palms of the oasis were a welcome sight, silhouetted against a starlit desert night. Cool, clean drinking water, a wash, and the night breeze combined with a meal of dried food found in the saddlebags had all four men ready for sleep. Henry and Indiana stayed awake longer than the others, discussing the day's events, but in truth simply enjoying the depth of the new bond between them. Indiana had always known his father loved him and was aware that he was loved in return, but there had been resentment and a growing gulf. Now that tension was gone forever, and Indiana relished the easy affection he had uncovered. His father's first use of the name "Indiana" had touched Indy's heart in a way nothing else ever had. Henry had gladly chosen his son over the Grail, the personal obsession that had created the rift between them in the first place. And though Henry never spoke of it, Indiana knew his father was equally moved by the easy courage of Indy's leap of faith, a step taken in love rather than lust for an archaeological relic.

Father and son had both learned a lesson that would forever alter their perspective on such things. The longing for the mysteries of the past would never leave their veins, but never again would it be used to cover an aching sense of loneliness. It was the first time Indiana had come away from a quest voluntarily empty-handed, yet never had he felt so contented, so relaxed. He lay flat on his back beside the oasis pool, his head cushioned on a saddle and his eyes fixed on silver stars framed by palm fronds. He would not have been aware that sleep had claimed him but for the touch of hands tucking a blanket about him and a deep voice saying, "Good night, son. Sleep well."

Indiana Jones smiled drowsily and rolled onto his side, drawing the blanket even closer about him. "Good night, Dad," he mumbled, remembering the last time his father had tucked him into bed. He must have been no more than eight-years old. It felt just as good now as then.

That night's wondrous peace was shattered completely with the arrival of the new day. It was a stark, shocking contrast. Indiana had been tucked into bed like a child and was awakened by the prodding of a rifle barrel in his guts. His eyes snapped open, focusing on a pair of boots topped by a Nazi officer's uniform and a cold smile.

"**Morgen**, Dr. Jones. Get to your feet! Carefully!" the German warned as he saw his prisoner's hands reaching for his holster. "You wouldn't want to see your friends hurt, would you?"

Furiously, Indiana transferred his glare from the officer to the other Nazis who surrounded Marcus, Sallah, and Henry. There must have been a dozen rifles bearing down on them. He had no choice but to obey and surrender his weapons. An infantryman stepped forward and herded him over to join his friends.

"Where the hell did they come from?" he growled to his father.

"As I recall," Henry explained casually, "some of the scum ran off before the temple came down around our ears yesterday."

"Shit!" Indy said concisely, now remembering the superstitious reaction of some of their guards to Henry's miraculous recovery. In the elation of that moment, it simply had not occurred to him that those men would report to their bosses--and Donovan's vehicle and radio would have been available to them. Indiana drew a deep breath and let it out slowly, his mind already hunting for solutions, for means of escape.

"What are they doing?" Sallah asked.

Indy looked back to the camp and saw the Nazis were carrying out a very thorough search. "The Grail?" he said with some surprise, speaking to his father.

Henry nodded.

Sallah repeated his question, and Indy answered with, "I think we're in trouble."

Sallah groaned.

It didn't take the Germans long to realize that what they wanted wasn't to be found among their prisoners' belongings. The officer stormed back to them, his blue eyes ablaze, as much with determination as anything else.

"So, where have you hidden it, Jones?" he asked as he halted before father and son.

"Hidden what?" Indy and Henry said in unison.

The officer nodded sharply to one of this men, and the soldier, a huge man with immense, muscular shoulders, grinned delightedly, stepped forward, and rammed both clenched fists into Indy's stomach. All the air left Indiana's lungs in an agonizing rush, leaving him no room even to groan. Gasping, blinded by pain, he sank to his knees, clutching at his burning gut. Before he had a chance to get his wind back, the soldier's knee came up and cracked against Indy's jaw, causing his teeth to slice through his lower lip. The force of the blow sent him sprawling backward to lie dazed in the warm sand. He was groggily aware of his father moving to protect him as the Nazi prepared to kick him again.

"That's enough!" Henry spat, his tone dangerously quiet. "You're wasting your time. We don't have the Grail."

Indy got his vision to focus in time to see the officer's astounded reaction to this response. Then he was hauled to his feet by two infantrymen who had been standing behind him. Not one to take blows without retaliating, and seeing the muscular soldier's expression showed his belief that the victim had been beaten into submission, Indy attacked. Head and shoulders down, he rammed into the guard's midriff. Much to Indiana's dismay, the fellow merely gasped and staggered a little. Still, he was off-balance, and, as the infantrymen grabbed his arms, Indy swung both feet up and kicked the man in the crotch. That did the trick; Muscles fell to his knees, mouth and eyes rounded in amazed appreciation of the pain flaring through him. Indy smiled with satisfaction, looked to his father, and was surprised to see open approval there.

"**Dummkopfs**!" the officer roared. "Hold him! Tie him to that tree!"

More soldiers joined the two, and Indy was dragged to the nearest palm tree. Ropes were produced and wound tightly about him, fastening him so snugly to the trunk that he could barely twitch. Indy's eyes remained defiant as the officer, a major, approached him. There was something even more chilling about Nazis than snakes, he thought as he stared hard into those ice-blue eyes.

"Now," the man said, looking toward Henry. "Listen carefully, Dr. Jones. I will ask only once more. Where have you hidden the Grail?"

"And I, **Herr** Nazi," Henry said calmly, "will tell you only once more that we no longer have it."

The officer's face tightened with absolute rage. "Very well, Dr. Jones. You give me no other choice." Coldly, he turned and watched as his henchman got to his feet, hunched over and hurting, but glaring at Indiana with murder in his eyes. "Karl," the major suggested, "perhaps you would like some vengeance? You may use your knife."

Karl's sickeningly pleased smile was backed by gasps of horror from Henry, Marcus, and Sallah, all of whom instinctively made to place themselves between the Nazi and their defenseless friend. The infantrymen raised their rifles and forestalled further intervention. Karl chuckled to himself with maniacal pleasure as he drew a razor-edged knife from its sheath and stalked toward his bound prey.

More than a little afraid, Indiana fastened on his anger instead, finding his sheer hatred of such creatures could give him more than enough courage to direct a deadly cold glare of his own deep into the madman's eyes. There was a very satisfying hesitation before the German came any closer. The upraised blade caught the glow of the rising sun, its edge becoming a vicious, dull red. The Nazi laughed softly, deep in his throat, as he saw this symbol of what he desired. One of the infantrymen reached out and tore Indy's shirt, baring his chest to the knife.

"Wait!" Henry pleaded.

"Cut me and I swear you'll never see the Grail," Indiana promised steadily, holding the officer's gaze now. He felt the cold blade nick the skin below his ribs, but he didn't as much as flinch, maintaining that visual promise as well and adding again the one word, "Never."

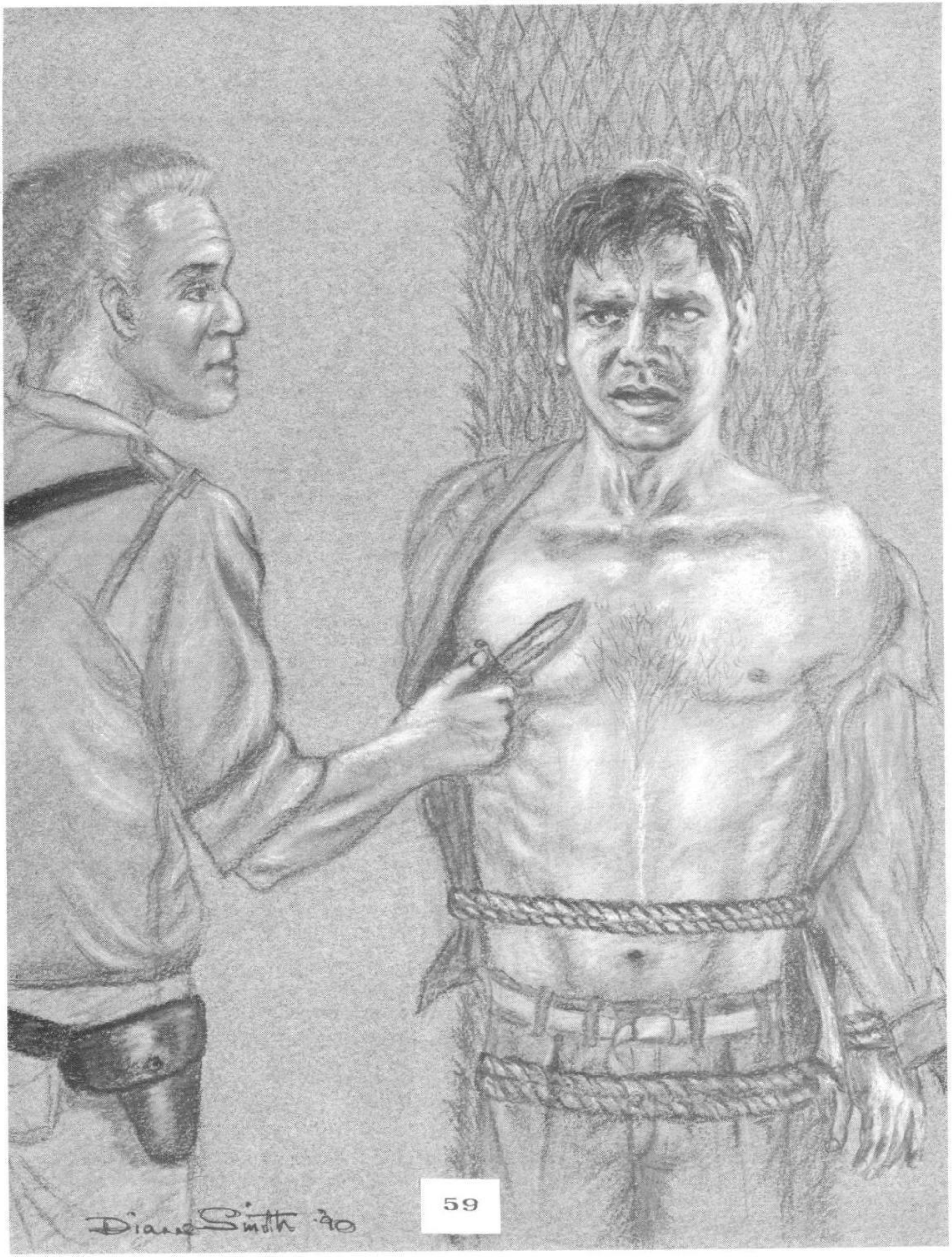
"Halt!" the major called as Karl prepared to plunge the knife deeper. "Halt!" he roared again. This time, reluctantly, the soldier obeyed. There was an outrush of air as Indy's friends breathed again. The officer came closer. "Very well, Jones," he said. "We have a deal. Give me the Grail and you and your friends may go unharmed.

"I don't do deals with Nazis," Indy replied softly. "I was only telling you that nobody gets anything out of me with a knife. Got it?"

The German's teeth clenched as he fought to contain his anger. He had the man at his mercy! Why couldn't he see that? "**Sehr gut**, Dr. Jones!" he ground out. "Let's see how brave you really are. Karl!"

Grinning his pleasure, the soldier stepped up to the prisoner, forcing Indy's head up as he pressed the point of the blade into his jaw. Slowly, he dragged it down the man's throat, pausing at more sensitive places and working his way toward the heart. Ignoring the threatening rifles, Henry pushed forward, but the soldiers closed about him.

"He's your son, Dr. Jones," the officer taunted. "I wonder how long you will allow him to suffer before you tell me what I need to know. I will not


Diane Smith '90

leave here without the Grail. Life is not pleasant for those who fail the **Führer**."

Henry Jones's eyes were wild, more desperate than Indy would have believed possible. "Dad," he said softly, "remember what you said about the armies of darkness. If we--" Further words were cut off as he drew a sharp, hissing breath, biting down against pain as the knife suddenly dug deeper.

"In God's name, stop this!" Marcus shouted, struggling against his guard's hold, his expression horrified as he saw a line of red following the knife as it traced Indy's ribs.

"Stop!" Henry said sharply. Indy looked up at him, and he added, "They'll never find it back there. Please, boy. I can't."

Indy nodded agreement. Henry was right. In the mess back at the temple, it would take a long time to recover the Grail, if that were even possible. Maybe somehow during that time they could find a means of escape. Any sense of defeat was eased by relief as Henry's bargaining with the officer resulted in Karl being forced to put away his knife. Nonetheless, he was left tied uncomfortably tightly to the tree, exposed to the burning sun as it climbed higher and the Germans rested after their night's journey. He tolerated it all as stoically as possible--the searing heat, the flies stinging his sticky, bloodied cuts, the cruel taunts of the Nazis who held water flasks to his lips then withdrew them before he could drink, and the muscle cramps. But as morning became afternoon, and the Germans prepared to break camp, Indiana's courage deserted him in a sudden rush of panic as he caught sight of something slithering toward him through the hot sand.

"Dad!" he bellowed. "Dad!"

Surprised, many of the Germans turned and stared at him, then began snickering and laughing, believing the hot sun had finally fried the man's brains and melted his resolve. Equally startled, Henry got to his feet, determined to reach his son and was further amazed when he met no opposition.

"What is it, boy?" he asked in concern as he came up beside the bound man.

But Indiana seemed incapable of speech, trembling and sweating, his eyes wide with fear.

"Easy, Junior," his father said reassuringly. "I'll get you out of here." One of the soldiers saw what he was doing and moved to stop him, but the major ordered Indiana's release.

"Get him up on a horse!" he instructed. "Give him some water and bind his hands."

With the soldier's assistance, Indy was quickly freed. He immediately tried to back away from the tree, tripping and falling, but still desperate to get away.

"Junior? Are you all right?" Henry passed the canteen an infantryman handed him, and Indiana gulped greedily, though still backing away.

"Snakes, Dad," Indiana finally managed to explain. "I hate 'em."

Henry turned and looked. Sure enough, there was a serpent slowly making its way up the tree trunk. He shuddered, wondering how he would have felt if he had been bound so close to rats. He clapped his son's shoulder in sympathy. "Intolerable," he said. "Intolerable."

Major Haufmann was still uncertain about the Jones's story that the Grail had been buried in the cave-in. But given their desperate circumstances and the fact that the sacred relic was definitely not with their belongings even though they'd had no warning of attack and therefore no reason to hide it, there seemed no other logical conclusion. Dr. Jones, Senior, claimed that they had been on their way back to Iskenderun to seek the aid of a team of diggers, supplies, and machinery. That seemed plausible enough, if indeed the temple had collapsed. It was only a few hours before that claim would be proven.

He had hoped they were lying; the Fuhrer was not known for patience in these matters. The major was dismayed when at last he came face to face with the destroyed site. The Joneses had tried to convince him that they were of no further use and should be freed. As angry as he was, that idea had still caused Haufmann to laugh. Did they really think him such a fool? Even covered over by a cave-in, the temple layout would be familiar to the Americans, and they would have all the experience necessary for directing the dig. Also they had been last to lay eyes on the Grail and knew precisely where it had fallen. Major Haufmann gave them extra incentive by informing them that the Fuhrer would not wait forever, and if they had not found the Grail within a reasonable time, Marcus Brody would be executed. To forestall any escape attempts, the old man was being held far from his friends back at the palace.

More men and equipment had arrived in the past week, and the dig seemed to be progressing very efficiently. Major Haufmann was proud of himself. But all that pride and self-confidence vanished within the space of the next few terrifying minutes. The earth beneath him suddenly shuddered and heaved, throwing him down, then tossing and rolling him as the tremors continued. Out here in the open, he realized he was fairly safe, but tons of stone and earth had cascaded down about the temple mouth. He wondered how far that fall extended inside where the Joneses, their diggers and guards were working. He had ignored the Americans' warnings that the temple site was not stable, that it needed extensive shoring before they should proceed further. Haufmann had been certain they were simply trying to stall. It was a costly mistake, he realized as at last the earth stilled and he got to his feet to survey the damage. He would be severely disciplined once the Fuhrer learned this latest setback. He sighed and shook his head dispiritedly. Well, at least he was alive and unharmed; the Joneses were probably dead--or would be if they weren't soon dug free. Squaring his shoulders, the major began organizing a rescue team. After all, he still needed the father's and son's expertise. He would also have to make a report, but perhaps now his commanders would listen and respond to his demands for heavier earth-moving equipment.

Deafening noise. Darkness. Choking dust. Earth turned to violent, tossing seas. To Henry Jones it seemed to go on forever. He could see nothing, nor hear over the roaring thunder of crumbling, cracking stone. His mind's eye replayed again and again his last image of his son, digging away at the rear wall--the same wall that had split apart like an egg cracking open. Huge slabs of stone rained down, and Henry's heart froze, stopped once more with the certain belief that he had lost his son forever.

Finally, it was over. The noise was the first to still, then the violent tremors became mere shivers, though the dust continued to make the air barely breathable. Somehow some of the lanterns had survived the upheaval, but clogging dust still limited vision to not much more than an arm's length. Henry rolled free of the loose debris covering him and staggered blindly toward what he hoped was the rear of the temple.

"Junior!" he shouted hoarsely. But he managed the pleading cry only once before dust filled his lungs, and he gave way to a fit of coughing. Suddenly, Sallah appeared beside him, carrying a lantern, his dark eyes revealing the same fear. Their gazes locked, each filled with desperate hope, but finding no comfort from the other. They turned and ran forward. Through the settling dust they could see that the temple's rear wall was now no more than a huge mound of rubble. There was no sign of Indiana, nor his diggers or guard.

"Indy!" Sallah called, hurrying toward Henry. "Where?"

Frantically, Henry tried to recall an exact location. It all looked so different now, and the fall was so immense. If his son were still alive, he could suffocate before they even found the right place to dig. "I--I'm not sure," he replied. "Somewhere near the center, I think. You start there, and I'll work toward you from here."

Both men were startled as some of the rubble seemed to come to life, heaving upward as someone moved beneath it. Henry and Sallah hurried to assist, bitterly disappointed when their prize turned out to be one of the diggers. But at least now they had a better idea of Indy's location as the man informed them he had been working right beside him. They scrabbled about on their knees, shoving away armfuls of sand, prying at clumps of rock--and praying for all their worth. Henry's terror and grief were too deep-seated to allow him room for much gratitude when the two surviving German guards joined them, and the work went faster.

Time passed, and Henry knew his son could not have lasted this long without air. The Germans stopped working. He roared at them, cursing and simultaneously pleading with them to continue. The elder of the two, a gray-haired sergeant, coldly turned away. The younger trooper's eyes filled with pity, and he hesitated, but was shoved away by his companion.

"We're all dead, anyway," he said shortly, nodding toward the entrance corridor.

Henry realized for the first time that the quake had entombed them. He dismissed that knowledge and returned to digging, Sallah and the injured digger assisting, their movements heavily weighted with the belief that they would free no more than Indiana's dead body.

Then Henry's hand met with something soft, warm, and wet. He grabbed at it and was sure he heard an answering moan. "Please, God!" he gasped, calling to Sallah, "I've found him!" Then, "Junior! Junior? Can you hear me?"

The Germans turned back, and everyone froze, listening.

"There!" Henry exclaimed. "I hear him! Junior!"

Sallah frowned; he had heard nothing. He flicked a glance at the Germans, and their eyes showed the same doubt. Then they all heard it, the one muffled, weakly questioning word, "Dad?"

Henry shouted, "He's alive! Dig, damn you, dig!"

The Germans hurried forward, and Sallah warned, "Carefully!"

"Don't bring that down on him!" Henry nodded toward a precariously balanced slab only feet from them. Quickly they cleared away the rubble, wondering how much air the man could have left. The left arm was uncovered first, and all were dismayed to see blood matting the torn shirtsleeve. Elation replaced disappointment when the arm moved, and Indiana's hand groped frantically toward them. Henry grasped the hand and held it tightly. "Hang on, son," he said huskily. "We're almost there."

Finally, they cleared Indiana's torso, discovering the reason he had not suffocated. His head and shoulders were protected, sheltered beneath a section of one of the lion's heads that lay balanced across a huge column of rock. Had that column fallen only six inches closer, Indiana would have been crushed.

"D-Dad? Dad? Get me outa here, will you?" Indy's voice came shakily from the shadowed recess. "My arm hurts."

"Easy, Junior, easy," Henry soothed. "We have to go a little slower here, or we'll bring it all down again."

"Not much longer, Indy," Sallah told him. But he touched Henry's shoulder, his eyes dark with sorrow as he indicated what he had discovered. Henry's eyes widened in shock as he saw that Indiana's right arm had been savagely broken, twisted at an impossible angle. It was not bleeding heavily, but a tiny piece of white bone protruded from the one red stain below the elbow.

"Easy, son." Henry continued talking soothingly as he returned to the digging. The last of the rocks were cleared from the slab hiding Indy's head.

Sallah turned to ask the Germans' aid in lifting the broken piece of statue, annoyed that they had not already come forward. Then he saw the reason for it. "Oh, no," he whispered.

Henry turned sharply about, and fear flooded him yet again as he saw that his son's legs were pinned beneath a second slab.

"We cannot move it," the younger German said softly. "It is too heavy."

Henry's despair became savage fury, and he growled, "Then get up here and help us move this one!"

The soldiers obeyed, and, working in unison, the four men strained and heaved, and the slab finally rolled clear, bringing forth another cloud of dust and a minor fall of rubble. Henry leaned forward quickly, protecting his son's face. Then, as the older man sat up, Indiana smiled shakily at him and said, "Hi, Dad! Just can't get rid of me, can you?"

Henry slid an arm beneath his son's head and held him to his chest. "Thank God!" he repeated over and over, stopping only when Indiana protested. He straightened up and somehow managed a smile. "Let's see if we can splint that arm for you, all right, Junior?" He began dabbing at a gash on his son's forehead with his handkerchief, cleaning away the blood trickling into Indy's eyes.

"Don't call me Junior!" Indy said, half-jokingly, wanting to ease his father's concern, even though the pain was making him sick at his stomach. "Don't worry about the arm; just get me outa here!"

Henry and his companions exchanged nervous glances, wondering how best to explain. "Son," Henry said carefully, "can you move your legs?"

There was a tense moment as they watched the man try, his eyes filling with surprise over the pain. "Hell, I can't even feel them!" Indy struggled to sit up a little and keep his arm immobile at the same time. More pain flared in his chest, worsening as he drew a gasping breath.

"Easy," Henry warned, gently propping him up.

Indy blinked, staring in amazement at the heavy slab pinioning his legs from the knees down. "Ahh, shit!" he said weakly. "Now what?"

"Maybe if we dig in under your legs we can drag you free," Sallah suggested.

Indy sighed, slumping back heavily against his father's supporting arm. "Yeah. Looks like the only way." He peered around, assessing the damage to the temple. "The corridor?"

"Completely blocked," the younger German answered miserably.

"Oh, great!" Indy scowled. "It'll take them days to dig their way back in here!"

"Maybe not," Henry said more confidently than he felt. "Once Major Haufmann reports this second cave-in, Hitler will be so disappointed he'll probably buy up all the earth-moving equipment in the area."

Indy closed his eyes over the worsening pain. "Hitler to the rescue! Wonderful!"

Henry squeezed his son's shoulder. "Sallah, see if you can find his jacket, will you? And my coat, whatever you can find to use as blankets and bandaging. Everything was stacked with the packs in the middle of the floor. I don't think it's buried too deeply there."

"Right." Sallah moved off, giving Indiana a quick smile first.

It was as well the Germans had been using the temple as a makeshift prison, sending supplies inside at meal breaks. The two soldiers, Henry noted, were now working at moving stones from the blocked passage. "Be careful, you two!" he called. "It's not stable!"

They nodded back at him and continued less frantically.

Henry looked down at his son, heartsick when he saw that Indy's pain had finally become near-agony, breaking through the barrier of shock. He was shivering and moaning very softly. Henry wiped more blood from his face, alarmed by the pallor he found underneath. He began stroking the tousled hair in a pathetic gesture of comfort. "Easy, boy," he said gently. "We'll get you out of here, I promise."

Indiana swallowed hard against the stabbing pain. Unable to find his voice, he merely nodded, his lips moving with a faint, responding smile.

"The arm the worst?" Henry asked, almost too afraid to speak openly of it. "Do you think you're hurt . . . inside?"

Indy shook his head slightly. "Maybe some broken ribs. N-not too bad." He shivered violently, moaning with the pain of the tremors. "So c-cold."

Tears burned Henry's eyes as he observed this suffering, wondering if his son could be wrong about internal bleeding. Only a doctor could say for certain. His son could be dying for want of medical assistance! Henry swore, so that, surprised, Indiana opened his eyes and looked up at him. "C'mon, Dad. I'll be okay. Trust me."

Henry summoned an answering smile. "Of course you will, son. Nothing stops the Jones boys!"

"I found these," Sallah announced proudly, crouching down beside them. In his arms he carried Indy's jacket, Henry's coat, a blanket, and a canteen.

"Good work, Sallah. This will keep you warm, Junior." Henry was somewhat alarmed when his son did not protest the title he hated so much. Indiana was weakening rapidly. Gently, Sallah lifted his friend's head, tucking an empty tool bag beneath it as a pillow. Henry held the canteen to the man's lips, feeding him the water slowly, but Indiana pulled away after only two mouthfuls, despite his obviously desperate thirst.

"We're going to have to ration that," he muttered, licking his lips. "It'll be days before they reach us, but I think the air will last. Look."

Henry and Sallah turned in the direction of Indy's gaze and noted with relief the movement of a clear air current through the dust, coming from high above and to the rear of the temple.

"It m-must open on to--" Indy bit down hard, closed his eyes, then continued, "--the chasm between us and the knight's--" Pain cut him off again.

"Lie quiet, son," Henry told him. "Save your strength. We'll strap your arm and see if we can make it more comfortable for you. Then we'll get you out from under this thing, all right?"

Indiana nodded, his eyes still closed, his face gleaming with sweat, the skin waxy and white. Anxiously, Henry squeezed his son's shoulder, then set to work assisting Sallah with the splinting of the broken arm.

of shame or pity as he levelled his pistol at Henry Jones. "Give me the water."

Henry's eyes darkened further with disgust. "So now you're going to shoot me? What will that prove?"

"You're right," the German said coldly. He moved the pistol barrel until it was aimed squarely at the injured man. "We need you to dig. I'll put him out of his misery. He won't bother you anymore."

Before Henry could take action, the younger soldier jumped to his feet and blocked his superior's aim. "There's no need for that, Heinrich!" he pleaded. He turned to Henry. "Give him the water, Dr. Jones. Please."

Filled with savage hatred, Henry obeyed. The sergeant snatched the water bottle and took a quick gulp before putting away his pistol. "Wise move, **Herr** Jones," he sneered. He started to hand the canteen to his partner, but the young man, shamefaced, turned away, shaking his head, and returned to the digging.

Henry glared at them for a while, then turned back to his son, comforting him as best he could. "Please don't die, Junior," he whispered over and over. "Hang on to me. Please don't die." He held his son's hand tightly, afraid to release it, unwilling to return to the digging for fear that Indiana would die the moment he left him. "Fight them, son," he urged. "Fight them for me. You can do it." The words continued long into that second night, though there was only the faint gleam of lantern light to mark time here. With the words, Henry's hand stroked, wiping away the sweat and easing what he could of his son's burden.

"He's so still now," Sallah murmured. "So quiet."

Henry knew his son had entered the deeper state of unconsciousness known as coma. At least now there would be no pain.

Indiana Jones found himself wandering in darkness, alone but unafraid. No thoughts intruded on his peaceful solitude, and he cared for none. Somewhere at the back of his mind, he was aware that he had escaped some terrible ordeal. He was content to drift, unthinking and free. There was a light, beckoning in the distance, and, hypnotically, he was drawn toward it.

Someone suddenly blocked his view of that strangely entrancing light, and, mildly annoyed, he halted and looked toward the person's face. "You!" he gasped, noting somewhere that he spoke without a voice.

Elsa Schneider smiled at him. She was just as beautiful as ever, perhaps even more so. She wore an expression unlike any he had ever seen on her before, one of gentle, amused concern. He recalled the last expression he had seen on that lovely face, and guilt stabbed him. He had tried so hard to hold her, but she wouldn't listen, wouldn't help herself. She had been so terror-stricken when she fell, but now she was at peace, her blue eyes serene. Remembering that incident, Indy realized there was something very wrong here. Fear grabbed at him. Suddenly he seemed to slip backwards. The beckoning light dimmed, and pain lunged for him. He remembered that agony and knew he needed the light to escape from it. Still Elsa blocked his progress.

"No," she said softly, compassionately. "You must go back."

"Let me by!"

"No," she said again. "You tried to save me, Indy, even after all I had done to you. Now it's my turn to help you."

"I can't go back there," Indiana whispered, recalling the anguish.

"Listen," Elsa urged. "Your father is calling to you."

Somewhere during that process, Indiana lapsed into unconsciousness. Henry and Sallah were pleased he could no longer feel pain, but also frightened by this unnatural stillness. They called the Germans away from the passage, asking for their help in digging beneath Indy's legs. For a time, it seemed their efforts were in vain, but the loose earth under the man's legs finally gave way, creating just enough space to allow him to be dragged clear. The left trouser leg was quickly soaked with blood as circulation was fully restored. Indiana began to moan as the agony reached him even in his deep sleep. The left leg had also suffered a compound fracture.

"God in heaven," Henry prayed aloud, "please send us help soon."

Hours passed. They heard digging sounds and shouts from outside, overjoyed that the fall might not have been as wide as they had at first thought, but still estimating it would be days before help arrived. Henry was grimly certain his son could not last that long. The man lay tossing and dripping with delirium, and Henry could not even spare the water to cool his face. Nor could he sit with him for more than the few minutes he allowed himself to rest. He, Sallah, and the soldiers labored hard, moving rock from their side of the passage. The surviving digger had suffered a broken ankle and shock, but was managing to watch over Indiana to some extent, calling to Henry whenever the man began struggling so hard against fevered dreams that he might cause himself further injury.

Fire. Flames licked at him, flaring higher and higher. He was back in the Temple of Kali. Somehow it was he who was the sacrifice, not Willie. The cage lowered closer and closer, the heat became more and more intolerable. Then, just as he thought death would bring him blessed release, the cage rose, allowing him room to live, to suffer, to be lowered into the fire yet again. He moaned and prayed, struggled to break free, but shackles pinioned his arms and legs, white-hot, burning into his very bones.

Then there was laughter, evil, gloating laughter. Mola Ram's savagely painted face hovered above him, delighting in his agony. More laughter, and Donovan was there, too, then Belloq and others who were dead, but yet here somehow to taunt him, to add to his pain. He cursed and struggled, but the pain only worsened. For a fleeting moment the heat lessened, giving him wondrous respite as something cool soothed his burning brow. A gentler, welcome face appeared above him, swimming through the distortion of the waves of heat, and from somewhere far off his father's voice called to him. "D-Dad?" he whispered. "Dad, help me. They're here. They're burning me alive. Help me."

The coolness descended again, and then a miraculously pain-free wave of darkness washed over him, carrying him far from the fires of Kali and the cruel laughter of his enemies.

"Jones!" the German sergeant yelled. "Don't waste water on him!"

Henry knew the man was probably right. The water, what little they had, was desperately needed to replenish depleted bodily fluids, but that knowledge did nothing to erase his anger. Left to himself, Henry would sooner endure the killing thirst than see his son suffer like this. "He's burning up!" he answered sharply. "If I don't get the fever down, he'll die!"

"He's dying anyway," the old soldier snarled. His eyes showed no trace

Sure enough, Indiana could hear his father saying, "Please, son, don't leave me. I can't bear to lose you, too. Come back to me, boy."

Indy turned toward the broken, fearful voice. It was almost unrecognizable in comparison to the tone he was accustomed to from his often stern, always confident father. Gasping with shock, he saw, seemingly at an immense distance and somewhere below him, his own limp body cradled in Henry's arms. Nearby, Sallah also looked on anxiously. Understanding dawned, and Indy swung back to Elsa. "You're dead," he said flatly. "Am I dead, too?"

"You will die if you don't go back--now."

Indy looked back to that broken body, remembering the agonized dreams, the fire, the weakness, the thirst. And there was still no help to be had for him. What chance could he possibly have? What purpose would his continued pain serve? He looked into Elsa's oddly gentle eyes. "I--I don't--I'm not sure I can," he mumbled. "I'm not sure I even want to."

"You will not suffer long," Elsa promised. "I will send the Grail to help you."

"The Grail's lost!" Indy shouted, despairing anger in the words. How he had prayed for its healing powers!

"I will find it for you, I swear." Elsa suddenly seemed to recede from him, and Indiana heard his father calling once again: "Come back to me, son."

Still uncertain, Indiana turned back toward the light, a light that offered so much.

"My son," a woman's voice said softly. "My little one."

Indiana's heart leapt in joyful recognition. "Mom!" he called. "Mom!"

She was there, only an arm's length from him, smiling at him proudly as she had always done when he was a small boy returning with some tale of a sporting victory or another excellent school report clutched in his hand. She had delighted in sharing his successes, unlike his father who had always been too busy.

"I love you," she said. "Go to your father, Indiana. Please. He needs you badly. Tell him I love him. Go now. You'll be safe with Henry. Go."

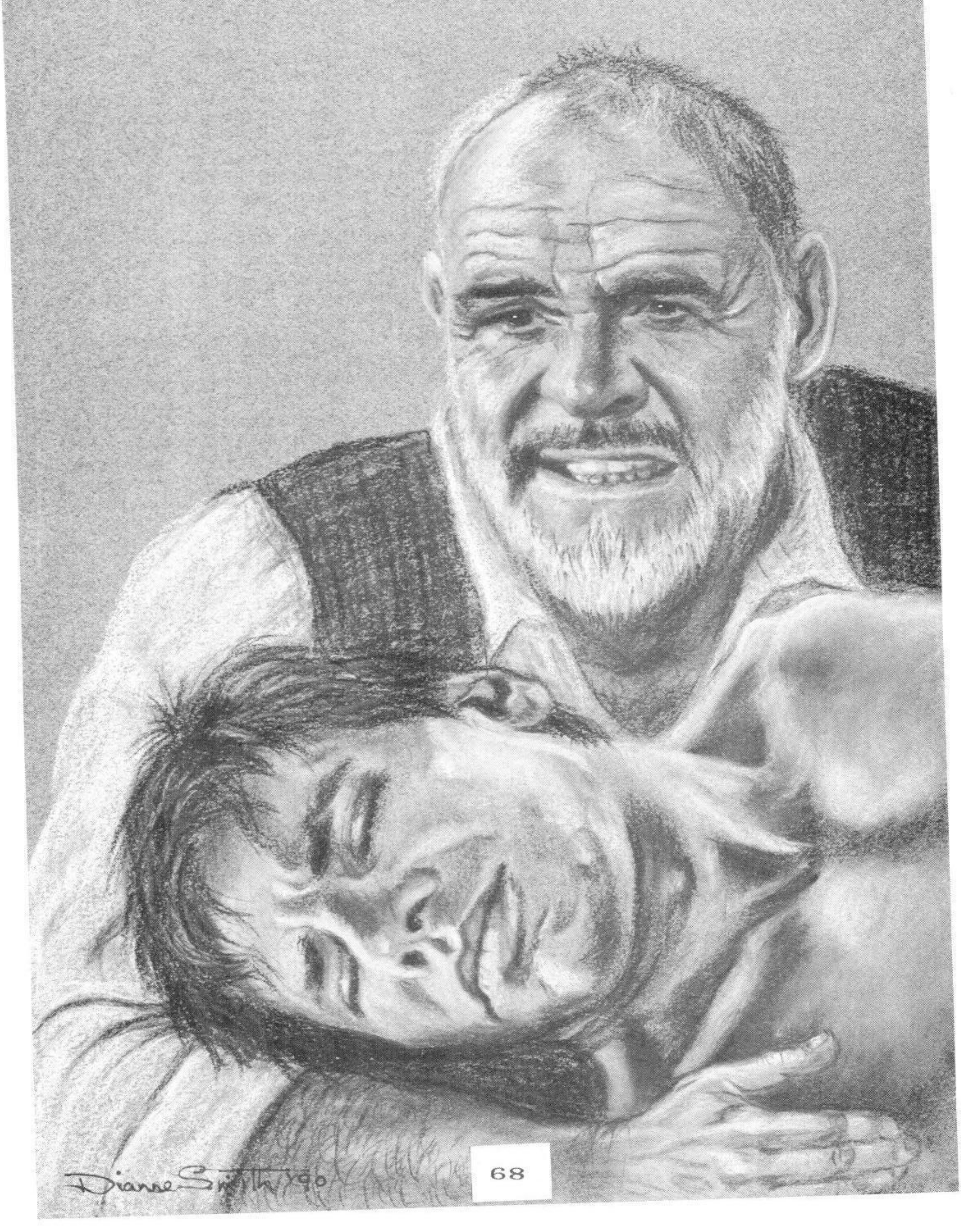
Suddenly feeling reassured and happy to obey, Indiana smiled and nodded. "I love you, too, Mom," he said, feeling himself falling down, rushing into his body.

"He can't hear me, Sallah," Henry said brokenly. "He's gone too far from us."

Choked by emotion, Sallah could do no more than nod sad agreement, grasping Henry's arm in a show of sympathy. Indiana was barely breathing now, his pale face free from all signs of pain and very peaceful-looking.

"I sat with him like this once before, you know," Henry continued, patting his son's limp hand. "We almost lost him then, too. He was only six-years old. Influenza . . ."

And the memory became real, drawing Henry back in time, back to that first tiny cottage where he and Mary had known so much joy. But this had been a time of great sorrow. It was summer, and he had been away from home, tracing down yet another clue to the existence of the Grail. A telegram had arrived, informing him of his son's grave illness. Now, he stood again at the boy's bedroom door, filled with the fear that he had come too late. The child was so pale, so still, so small, dwarfed by the huge body of the dog he loved so much. Indiana, they had named the malamute, and it was totally devoted to the boy, never far from his heels, waiting bright-eyed for his return from school. Now the animal lay across the foot of the bed, its eyes dark and


Dianne Smith '90

soulful, fastened immovably on the boy.

"Mary," Henry said softly. His wife sat beside the bed, clutching her son's small hand.

She looked up at him, anxious--and angry because of her helplessness. "He was asking for you yesterday," she said accusingly. "He called for you all day. Now it's too late. He asked you not to go, but, oh no, you had to go after that damned Grail again!" She burst into tears and drew her son's body close. "He's dying, Henry."

"Mary!" Somewhere, beneath the tide of emotion, he was surprised to hear her curse. He went to her, embracing her and wrapping his arms about his son at the same time. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry." He kissed and soothed her, then drew back to look long into her eyes. "I'm here now. We're together now. We won't let him die."

And so they had worked, laboring beyond the point of exhaustion, urging their son to come back to them. As the light of sunrise filtered into the room on the second morning after his return home, Henry watched as the boy opened his eyes and smiled up at him.

"Dad? Where were you? I was looking for you."

He had cradled his son and wept with joy. He'd thought he had learned from that experience, but Indiana's recent words returned to haunt him: "We never talked."

"Was I that bad?" he asked, looking down at the son who was now a man. "When we lost your mother . . . I just . . . couldn't talk anymore, not like we used to."

"Henry?" Sallah questioned.

Then another voice said clearly and distinctly: "Mom! Mom!"

Alarmed, they looked down at Indiana, certain he was at the point of death. But, much to their amazement, the man's eyes opened, bright and alert, and he smiled up at them.

"Dad?" Indiana said, the happiness of the vision still with him as he found himself again lying on the earthen floor, looking up into his father's anxious eyes. "I saw Mom! She said to tell you she loves you."

Henry's vision blurred. He nodded and smiled, but all his relief at his son's returned awareness left him in the belief that this was one final burst of fevered energy, that the man was hallucinating. "Be still, boy," he murmured, resuming the stroking of the damp hair. "Rest."

Indiana shook his head, fighting the heaviness of his body, puzzlement filling his eyes as he saw his father's disbelief. "I **did** see her!" he insisted. Pain sprang back to life with a sickening surge, and he gasped against the shock of it, feeling Henry hold him tighter in response, steadying him. "It was so p-peaceful there," he continued stubbornly, trying to explain, needing the memory to sustain him, to help him battle the pain. "Beautiful." He looked back into his father's sorrowful eyes, holding his gaze, wanting so much to convince him. "She's happy there, Dad. She's waiting for us."

"Shh, son. You're going to be all right. They're no far off reaching us now, boy."

Indiana shook his head in frustration, then remembered something else. "Elsa said she'd send the Grail to help us."

Sallah and Henry exchanged despairing glances, wishing there were something they could do to ease Indiana's delirium. Henry looked angrily toward the Germans who sat listening at the passageway. "He needs water," he entreated. "Please. Give him some water."

The older man did not react, ignoring the plea completely, but the younger met Henry's eyes, his cheeks flushing with shame. He turned to his sergeant and said, "Please, Heinrich."

The trooper reached out for the canteen, and the sergeant whirled about, snatching it back and knocking the younger man down.

"It's mine!" he screamed. "Don't touch it!"

"Bastard!" Henry swore, his body tensing with his need to attack the man.

"Don't worry, Dad," Indiana assured him. "We'll find the Grail again. Elsa promised."

Henry looked back to his son, intending to smile and reassure him, but was struck dumb by the depth of awareness and intelligence in the man's eyes. Indiana certainly didn't look delirious; in fact, he was smiling in response to his father's surprised expression.

"Trust me," Indy said. And winked.

"Junior?" Henry queried in astonishment. "You're really awake?"

Indiana grimaced over another wave of burning pain, all his good humor vanishing beneath the assault. "No, Dad," he muttered irritably, "I'm t-talking in my sleep! Damn! It hurts! I hope she hurries . . ."

"But, son," Henry protested, "she's dead!"

"I know," Indiana replied in a whisper, and a dreadful doubt began to gnaw at him. Maybe it **had** all been a dream . . . No, it was too real, more real than anything he had ever experienced before. But the pain was unbearable. "C'mon, Elsa," he grated. "I can't take this much long--"

The plea was cut short as an ominous rumble filled the cavern. The earth trembled, then began to shake violently.

"No!" Henry fought to protect his injured son as best he could, but the ground shifted and flowed beneath them. Indiana screamed raggedly as his broken limbs were jolted. Small stones and soil began raining down, and Henry flung himself over Indiana's upper body, shielding him. Sallah did likewise for the man's broken leg, cursing and begging for the quake to stop as he heard Indiana's continued agonized cries.

There was a tremendous cracking, rending sound, and the cavern floor split apart only feet from them, spewing up a new shelf of rock which halted only when it was three or four feet higher than the original section. The cries of the German soldiers were muted as they were tilted and rolled back further toward the sliding fall that had been the blocked passageway. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, the earthquake stopped. It became incredibly, strikingly quiet and still. The only sound was Indiana's less strident cries. He lay gasping and shivering as the worst of the pain abated, his fingers still clutching desperately at his father's shirtfront.

Henry sat up, checking his son for further damage, finding fresh blood on the bandaging, but nothing worse. "It's over, boy. It's over now."

But Indiana was uncaring, his eyes wide with amazement as he stared at a point just beyond his father's shoulder. He released his grip on the man's shirt to raise a shaky hand and point toward the object catching the shafts of light now entering the cavern. "Dad, look!" he said in awe. "Look! It's the Grail!"

Henry swivelled around, stunned as he discovered his son was right. "Sallah!" he called, and his friend hurried to retrieve the relic from where it had been returned by the earth's upheaval. Also stunned by this turn of events, Sallah nonetheless reacted swiftly, scrabbling through the rubble, coughing as dust filled his lungs, then slowing reverently as he picked up the Cup. He returned carefully, placing the sacred object in Henry's outstretched hands.

"Thank the Lord!" Henry whispered. Smiling, he turned to his son. "Take it," he said. "You've earned it."

Indiana shook his head, wanting to tell his father that he had worked much longer, given up more, but pain threatened to overwhelm him, to push him back into the blackness. But for the Grail, he would have willingly surrendered to that promise of peace. He clung desperately to consciousness, the agony nauseating him. He retched, but had nothing to bring up. His mouth was so dry it felt full of sand. If only he had some water! His lips were split and bleeding, and he licked hungrily at the moisture. Distantly, he felt Henry closing his weak fingers around the Cup, but what good was it to him without water?

Henry had come to the same conclusion. He turned, searching frantically for their German companions, hoping they still had the canteen and had not been buried. Joy filled him as the two came staggering through the dust, seeking the comfort of the group and the extra light flooding that end of the cavern.

"Over here! Quickly!" Henry called in guidance. "Bring the water!"

The soldiers made their way down the newly formed incline. They came to a halt, rubbing dirt from their eyes, blinking in amazement as they caught sight of the Cup within Indiana's grasp.

"The Grail!" the younger one said, his voice full of awe.

"Yes," Henry replied. "It can save my son, but I need water." He looked up at the elder man, dismayed when he immediately backed away, clutching the canteen to his chest. "Please. Give me the water."

The Nazi shook his head, smiling almost insanely, the past three days of internment pushing him too far. "It's mine. No water for him. He's dying."

"The Cup can **save** him!" Henry shouted, but the man only laughed and backed further away.

"Please, Heinrich!" the youngster said softly, approaching his superior warily. "Just give him a mouthful. The Cup **does** work. I have seen it."

The old sergeant shrugged and turned away. "So what," he said uncaringly.

Henry had no intention of accepting refusal. He flung himself at the sergeant, and they went down in a tangled heap, Jones struggling to reach the water bottle and the Nazi, his gun. The soldier succeeded at the same time Henry did, but fortunately his first shot went wide. Henry heard, but ignored the danger. He had the water; all he cared for was bringing it to his dying son.

"Halt or I will kill you!" the German screamed. Henry continued to walk forward, his back turned defenselessly to the gun. He heard the trigger cock and prepared for the impact, making to throw the canteen to Sallah who sat protectively by Indiana. Then there was another crashing rumble, not an earthquake, but coming from the entrance. Voices followed, and more Nazis swarmed into the temple. Making use of the distraction, Henry hurried to his son, taking the Grail from Indiana's dangerously weak grasp and filling it with water.

"I will take that now, thank you, Dr. Jones," Major Haufmann said coldly from behind him. Henry ignored him, starting to lift Indiana's head. "Now!" the Nazi roared, and a bullet impacted less than an inch from Indiana's broken arm.

Henry swung about, his eyes ablaze. "In the name of the Lord! Just let me give him the water! Then you can take it!"

"I will take it now," the major snarled, raising the pistol toward Indiana's heart. "Do not waste its powers." Sickening inspiration filled the Nazi's eyes, and he added, "I have what I want. I no longer need either of you."

Horrified, Henry stared into the bore of the gun as it moved toward him. He closed his eyes, awaiting death.

"Hold!" a calm, resonant voice called, breaking the stillness. The Grail knight suddenly emerged from the rear of the cavern, his armor gleaming in the dusty beams of light as he came striding toward them. By the time Major Haufmann had recovered from the shock, the knight was standing between him and the Joneses, his sword drawn and upraised in what the Nazi saw as a pathetic gesture of protection. "You have no claim to the Cup," the knight informed him. "You have not been tested."

Major Haufmann's lips twisted into a cruel laugh. "Stand clear, old man, or I will shoot you, too!"

"Death holds no fear for me," the knight replied. But, surprising them all, he stood to one side. "Give him the Cup, Dr. Jones," he said quietly.

"But--" Henry protested. "My son!"

"I will protect him, he who vanquished me," the knight promised, looking down at Henry with a gentle smile. "Do as I bid."

Looking into those calm, wise eyes suddenly convinced Henry that all would be well so long as he did what he was told. He stood and held the Cup out to the Nazi.

Major Haufmann snatched it and immediately gulped down the water. "Immortality is mine!" he crowed. His ever-present henchman looked beseechingly, greedily from him to the Cup and back again. "Drink, Karl!" the officer laughed. "The **Führer** wishes immortality for all his army! The world will soon be ours! Drink!"

The soldier needed no further urging. Eagerly, he took the Cup, refilled it, and swallowed the contents. Leering victoriously, he passed the Grail to his fellow troopers. They drank, coldly ignoring the agonized moans from the dying man at their feet.

Only one refused, drinking only after he was threatened into obedience. The young soldier who had been entombed with the Joneses seemed greatly shamed by the actions of his countrymen. Finishing his turn with the Cup, he looked pleadingly at his superior, compassion giving him the courage to ask, "Please, Major, allow me to give some to **Herr** Jones. He is in pain."

Surprised and grateful, Henry met the young man's gentle eyes. "Thank you," he said sincerely, reaching up as the trooper offered him the Cup. There was a shattering, echoing blast as the major fired, the bullet tearing into the youngster's back. He staggered, the force of the impact driving him to his knees. Sallah hurried to steady him, but the young man, eyes wide with astonishment, waved away the assisting hands and got to his feet unaided. As he turned around, Henry saw there was no sign of blood or a wound, just a ragged hole in the man's uniform. Everyone stared, over-awed at this evidence of the Grail's promise.

"It works!" the major exclaimed. "Karl! Return it to me!"

Karl moved to obey, reaching toward the Cup still lying where the trooper had dropped it. But the knight was faster. He retrieved the Cup and passed it to Henry.

"Give my friend to drink," he instructed, his eyes saddened as he observed Indiana's suffering. "He is sorely in need."

The major's face set into hard, cold lines of absolute fury as he prepared to fire on the knight. Then his expression altered to despairing, disbelieving shock, his eyes round with horror as his body refused to obey him. He was frozen as rigidly as one of the temple statues.

"You are under my power now," the knight informed him, his gray eyes lighting with victory. "All those without compassion who drink from the Cup are eternally damned. Yes, you have immortality, but nothing more. Your only salvation lies in finding courage to cross the Seal. Then you face the same fate as the other evil one."

"Donovan?" Henry asked. The knight nodded, and Henry nodded as well in approval before at last turning to minister to his injured son. Indiana had told him of the horrible manner of Donovan's death.

Indiana was barely conscious, and Henry had to ease him up, urging him softly to drink. Groggily aware of what this fluid meant for him, and achingly thirsty, Indiana fought the darkness and pain, struggling to swallow the water. Immediately, the liquid erased his thirst, sating him instantly, washing away the painful dryness of his swollen lips and throat. He felt its soothing coolness spreading through his veins like a brilliant tide of light, erasing the dark, gnawing agony as if it had never been. The sensation was the greatest luxury he had ever known. He swallowed more easily now, and strength followed in the wake of comfort. He found at last he was able to open his eyes, eager to look into his father's face once more, share the miracle of his healing. Henry's gaze met his, bright with elation. Indiana sat up a little further, feeling no pain from his ribs or arm, curious to see the effects as Henry tended the fractures. The makeshift bandages were unravelled from around the wounds which were still ugly, swollen, and bruised, crusted with dried blood, but causing him not the least pain.

There was no more water within the Cup. Henry turned, searching. All the Germans stood immobile, incapable of movement, having surrendered their will power to the Grail knight who stood watching them with evident satisfaction. He lifted his hand palm outward in the same salute he had given Henry and Indiana on their last meeting. But now that salute was directed at the young trooper who had done his best to aid Indiana. The soldier found, much to his amazement, that he was free. He nodded thanks to the knight, then hurried to pick up the major's canteen. Grinning boyishly, he handed it to Henry.

"Such is the reward for compassion," the knight informed him smilingly.

The youngster crouched down beside Indiana, his eyes showing some anxiety as he saw the man's injuries had not disappeared. "Dr. Jones . . ." he said hesitantly. "Are you still in pain?"

"No," Indiana answered with a smile. "I'm fine." To prove the point, he reached out his right arm and clasped the trooper's hand warmly. "Thank you."

The soldier flushed, but his lips curved into a proud smile. "I am glad you will be all right."

Then they both turned and watched as Henry began pouring water from the Grail onto the fractures.

Indiana gasped, more in surprise than pain, as a strange tugging grabbed at his limbs, a mild stinging sensation spreading through them. He had seen it happen once before, but it amazed him nonetheless. The water hissed and bubbled around the wounds, then subsided, clearing away, revealing smooth, healthy flesh. Indiana felt like cheering. Instead, he tested his legs, relishing the separation from the earth on which he had lain for what seemed an eternity. He stood straight and tall, revelling in the strength returning to him. Henry stared at him, tears coursing down his cheeks, a smile of wonderment playing about his mouth.

"Dad," Indiana said softly. He took one step forward and drew the man into a hard, fierce embrace of pure, joyful love. That moment's reunion felt even better than their embrace on the clifftop when he had first understood just how great a love his father had for him. They moved back to gaze long into each other's eyes, then Indiana said gleefully, "Enough resting! Let's go find Marcus!"

Not Exactly a Night

by

Irina Ozernoy

"I'm going after Dad!"
--Indiana Jones

Henry Jones, Sr. smiled at his longtime friend and settled more comfortably into the large bed. "So, Marcus," he said with great fondness, "just how **did** you manage to get lost in your own museum, eh? Take a little detour down to the basement?" He winked at the curator, thinking back to their joint antics at Eton and Oxford.

Marcus Brody blushed furiously, also remembering. "Oh, pish-posh," he hemmed. "It was really nothing so serious as that. You'll have to ask Indy for the details."

"I guess I **will** have to," Henry considered thoughtfully. "That boy and I **do** have a lot to talk about, after all."

Since their arrival at Sallah's spacious home in Cairo several days before, the two men had seen very little of one another. Indy was out most of the time, anyway, and Henry had used the opportunity to rest up. Sharing his son's adventures might have been an interesting experience, but Henry no longer had as much youthful endurance as before, a fact to which Marcus could also attest.

Marcus cleared his throat. "Are you finally going to tell him, Henry? He has a right to know."

Henry nodded. "I've already wasted enough time. And I almost lost him for good, Marcus. I don't want that to happen."

Indiana Jones paused in front of the door to Henry's bedroom. After a great deal of effort, early this morning he and Sallah had finally managed to book passage on a flight to London for all of them, and he was eager to share the good news. However, the old, ingrained habits died hard; he still quailed at the thought of disturbing his father during his repose. He shook his head ruefully and knocked softly. "Dad? You still asleep?"

"Junior? Come in." Henry's voice was somewhat muffled.

Indy turned the knob and, as the door swung open, stepped into the room. What he saw made him gape in astonishment. He couldn't believe his eyes, but there it was, in plain sight. His father. In bed with . . .

Lurching into the room, Indy slammed the door behind him and continued to stare, slack-jawed, at the scene in front of him. "D-Dad!" he stuttered, amazed. "I--uh--didn't realize--uh--that the two of you--uh--well, um . . ." He ground to a halt, unable to verbalize his inner turmoil.

"Don't look so startled, boy!" Henry's tone was full of amusement. "Surely you suspected that Marcus and I were more than just . . . friends."

Indy could only gurgle in consternation. Marcus had assured him that the rumors about British public schools were grossly exaggerated, but now it seemed that Elsa Schneider wasn't the only thing he'd shared with his father. Swaying slightly, he took a step back. "Uh--Dad, I'll just be going now," he mumbled.

"Wait, Junior!" Henry called out after him. "There's so much we have to discuss!"

" . . . And I **still** don't understand why you insist on calling yourself after that damned dog!" Henry grumbled.

Indy had calmed down a bit and had been persuaded to sit down on the far edge of the bed, though he was still staring at his father in disbelief. At the mention of his namesake, however, he got up abruptly and frowned. "Hey, I've got a lot of fond memories of that dog!"

Henry raised an eyebrow, finally understanding. "No wonder you were so upset when I had it neutered," he said.

Indy looked at him angrily. "I don't want to talk about it!" he snapped. "And I resent your earlier implications that I use the whip as more than just a weapon!"

Henry chuckled. "Now, now, son, that was only a suggestion, nothing more . . ." He was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Father of Indy?"

"Dammit, it's Sallah!" Indiana sprang even further away from the bed. "What the hell is he doing back here?"

The door burst open, revealing the big Egyptian. "Father of Indy! Marcus Brody, man! I am so glad that you are here!" Sallah boomed happily. Walking in, he discovered Indy, who was trying hard to look inconspicuous. "What, Indy, my old friend? You are joining us also?"

Indy looked extremely pained. "Sallah, what about Fayah and the kids?" he finally forced out.

"What **about** Fayah and the kids? Sallah **is** Egyptian, after all." Henry shrugged eloquently. "And don't try to pretend you're a prude; I know all about you and the Ravenwoods."

Indy blanched noticeably. He had assumed that most people had forgotten about that particular indiscretion.

Sallah, meanwhile, had removed his fez and was working on several other articles of clothing. He beamed at Indy. "Just like old times, eh, my friend?"

Indiana pointedly ignored the remark. "I don't suppose you'd call **this** 'archaeology,' Dad?" he said, quite acidly.

Marcus, who had been uncommonly silent, suddenly spoke up. "Actually, Indy, 'anthropology' would be a much more accurate descriptive term," he interjected brightly.

Utterly disgusted, Indy slammed the door on his way out. The three men still in the room all looked at one another.

"Now," Henry said finally, "what shall we talk about?"

Indy stormed out onto the veranda in a fit of jealous rage. How could his father keep this from him for all these years? And Marcus had surely known all along. He had never felt more betrayed. What a wolf in the fold the innocent-seeming curator had turned out to be! Was there no one at all he could trust?

Indy's wallowing in self-pity was rudely interrupted several hours later by none other than Henry Jones, Sr. The older man took in the sight that his son presented--bloodshot eyes, unshaven chin, rumpled clothes--and smiled with long-suppressed pride. That's my boy! he thought contentedly.

His reflexes trigger-fine, Indy had whipped around as soon as he had heard approaching footsteps. Now, arms crossed, he stood a few feet away from his father, pouting sullenly. "Why didn't you trust me, Dad?"

Henry looked down in chagrin. "I didn't want to hurt you, son," he said. He continued, in a conciliatory tone, "Junior, there's been too much misunderstanding between us. Surely we can put it all behind us . . ."

Indy's frown slowly gave way to a half-smile. "Okay, Dad," he said. "Maybe we **should** just give it a rest. C'mon, let's go have a drink."

Eager to establish some easy camaraderie with his son, Henry heartily concurred. As they walked back into the house, he reminisced. "Remember the last time we shared a drink? I think we drank out of the same Cup . . ." He choked suddenly. "Uh--Junior, is that your bullwhip in your pocket, or are you--er--?"

Indy just grinned. The Grail, it seemed, did grant a kind of "eternal life."

"Junior! Look what you did! I can't believe what you did!"

" . . . huh? What?" Plucked from unconsciousness, Indy was momentarily disoriented. He looked around, seeing vague shadows that slowly coalesced into more meaningful shapes. His head hurt like hell--where was he, anyway? He tried to sit up and nearly brained himself on the underside of the wooden table beneath which he was lying. Groaning softly, he slumped back.

Henry continued to scold. "You passed out, Junior! During a drinking contest! Didn't I tell you not to drink so much whisky?" He paused. "By God, Junior, when will you learn to listen to your father?"

"Sorry, Dad . . ." Penitent, Indy passed out again.

When he came to, he found himself back at Sallah's, on the large bed he knew to be his father's. He sprang to his feet, warily.

"Up already, Junior?" Henry was comfortably perched on the nearby armchair. "You're not the boy I knew twenty years ago."

Indy chose to let that one slide by and cleared his throat. "Uh--Dad? I'm sure you've had a long night . . ."

"Well, not exactly a night . . ."

"Yeah, whatever. Why don't you come to bed?" Smirking, Indy had removed his leather jacket, letting it drop to the floor. Equally gracefully, he divested himself of shirt, pants, and shoes, and moved toward Henry like a stalking panther.

"Oh, son," Henry said after a moment, eyes wide with wonder, "I'll never call you 'Junior' again."

◆

There's an interesting little background to this story. It seems that towards the end of last year's MWC I was walking down a hallway in the Lansing Holi-Hilton-Day Inn with Irina and some other equally demented Ford fans, and Irina said she would try and send me an Indy-slash-Dad story for the first issue.

"Uh, Irina," I said, "thanks. But **Night** isn't a slash zine."

"Oh, no. I meant and Indy **and** Dad story."

And then **this** shows up on my doorstep. And she even wanted to dedicate to me because, as she phrased it, I asked for it. I mean, what's a genteel editor like me to think? Huh?

Misunderstanding

by

Samia R. Martz

Ten-year-old Indiana Jones stood in the front room of his Utah home looking very studiously at his shoes. He much preferred that to his father's furious glare. He knew he was in deep trouble, not for the first time in his young life.

Henry Jones stared down at him forbiddingly. "Have you anything to say for yourself, boy?"

"I--" He tried to look up at his father, but failed miserably. "No, sir. I--I guess not."

"You stayed away from school for an entire day. Did you think I wouldn't find out about it?"

"I kind of thought maybe--"

"You **thought**? **That** would be a novel experience, wouldn't it?" Henry's lips tightened ominously. "I'll see you in my study in five minutes, Junior."

"Yes, sir," he said glumly to the closing door. He was hoping very fervently that his latest misadventure hadn't earned him a whipping, but he had a strong suspicion that it had. He could usually tell from the look in his father's eyes. Henry's beatings were rare but legendary, and the boy had suffered two truly memorable hidings in the past, experiences he wasn't eager to repeat.

Unhappily, he sank down on the floor next to his dog and put his arm around the animal. "I think I'm in for it, Indiana," he muttered dismally. The dog licked his face consolingly.

He waited until the wall clock told him the time was up. When his father said five minutes, that was what he meant, no more, no less. He got up and crossed over to the study door.

"Come in," Henry said in response to the knock.

Indy slipped into the room, closing the door behind him. "Dad, I--"

"You what?" There wasn't the remotest hint of encouragement in his deep, stern voice.

"I . . ." But he faltered again. How could he explain to his father that it wasn't the sort of day to be cooped up in a stuffy classroom with an even stuffier teacher when there was so much to explore and enjoy and investigate? "It--it doesn't matter."

"I'm afraid it **does** matter--considerably. You've disrupted my entire day, worried your teacher, caused the worst sort of trouble--My God, Junior, what made you do it?"

Indy was silent for a moment. Mom would have understood, he thought resentfully. Mom would have understood. Finally he only mumbled, "I dunno."

"Oh, that's a fine explanation, most satisfactory."

"What're we talking about it for?" Indy burst out suddenly. "What difference does it make? You know you're gonna lick me no matter what I say."

"You certainly deserve it."

"Yeah." Indy's voice was now bitter. "For disturbing your precious research."

"I don't care for your tone, Junior."

"Well, it's true," the boy said defiantly, shaking his thatch of brownish-blond hair from his forehead.

"That's enough," Henry said coldly. He stood up and began to unbuckle his belt. "Bend over the desk."

Indy did as he'd been told, biting his lip to hold back any further retort. He knew from painful experience that that would only make things worse, and by the expression on his father's face, they were going to be bad enough already. But he wouldn't make a sound, not if he could help it, no matter how bad it hurt. He swore not to give Henry the satisfaction of even the tiniest whimper. It wasn't fair, he thought angrily. It just plain damned wasn't fair. All he'd wanted was--

His breath came in with a sharp gasp as the first stroke descended, and his eyes watered. Jeeze, it really **stung**! The old man must be awful mad, and keeping quiet clearly wasn't going to be easy. But he squeezed his eyes shut and clenched his teeth, still determined, as the punishment went on. Not a squeak, he promised himself. Not one lousy squeak.

Finally, Henry brought the belt down for the last time, hoping the boy had learned his lesson. He'd been hard on his son, he knew, but it needed to be done. He had a pretty fair notion of why Junior hadn't bothered to put in an appearance at school today, and he felt the boy had to learn to take responsibility and not go running off just because he was bored. "All right," he said shortly. "Get up."

Indy pushed himself unsteadily away from the desk, wiping his face on his sleeve, sniffling a bit. He hadn't been able to keep all the tears back, but at least he hadn't yelled.

"Very well." Henry was a little unsteady himself, and he had to take a deep breath before continuing. "You may go to your room now. You'll do without your supper tonight. And, except for school, you're confined to the house and yard for the next two weeks."

"Y-yes, sir," he managed after a hard swallow. He was too sore and shaken to protest the confinement--not that it would have done any good!

When Indy had limped uncomfortably from the room, Henry turned to the window and muttered a few words no one would have credited him with knowing. Why did the boy **do** these things to him? Dammit, what made him act that way? When Elizabeth had been alive, it hadn't been like this. But so many things had been different when his wife was there, so many things.

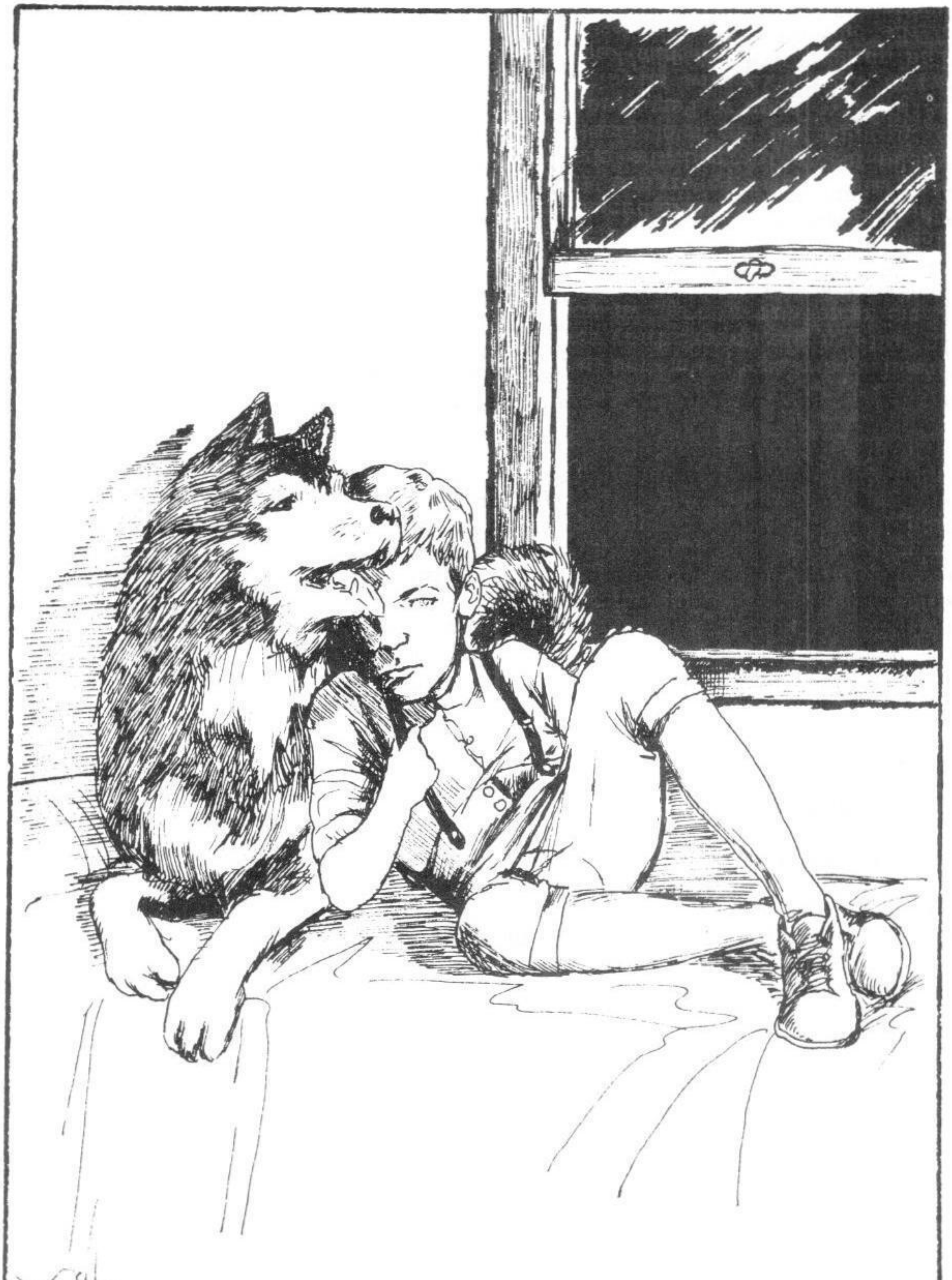
He slumped down in the chair behind his desk, rubbing at his eyes with thumb and forefinger. Although he couldn't admit it, not even to himself, his son had frightened him badly, disappearing the way he had. He'd thought of a thousand things that could have happened to the boy, none of them good. Nor could he admit how much it hurt to think of losing Junior like that, the one link with his past gone, gone like Elizabeth . . .

He shook himself suddenly, coming back to reality. He had work to do, for heaven's sake, and he couldn't afford to sit idly like this. He'd lost nearly a day of research, and--

But he sank back in his chair with a tired sigh and only watched the light patterns playing on the wall as the sun set.

Indy spent the evening in his room, huddled next to his dog, weeping out his misery and loneliness into his pet's rough coat. It seemed his father would never understand **anything**, at least not anything important, just that damned Grail. Indy still felt Henry considered the worst part of his offense the interruption of his research. "Worried your teacher," he'd said; not "Worried me." Like he'd care!

Finally, he fell into a fitful sleep on the bed close to Indiana, having cried


DANI '90

himself into near-exhaustion. It was some time later when he was awakened by a knock. Scrubbing at his face with his hand, he got stiffly to his feet and went to answer the door. He knew it would be his father, but he couldn't figure out what he'd want.

Henry looked down into his son's swollen, tear-stained face, the rapidly blinking eyes. He felt badly about what he'd had to do, but he hadn't had any choice to his way of thinking. He'd beaten the boy as his father would have beaten him in a similar situation, though probably not as severely. He hadn't known any other way to handle it. Elizabeth would have, he thought absently.

"I came to say good night, Junior."

"G'night," Indy responded, not looking at him, not really caring.

There was an awkward silence, and then Indy closed the door, seeing no point in dragging it out. He went over to the open window and sat on the bed staring out into the darkness. Tears filled his eyes again. Just as he had buried his head in his arms, the door opened.

"Junior . . ."

He quickly wiped his face. "Dad, I--"

"Son, is there anything wrong?"

Indy could only stare at his father in total disbelief. Something **wrong**? Oh, nothing--except that there wasn't a speck of love or warmth or kindness in this house anymore, no understanding or caring. His mother was gone, nothing could bring her back, and nothing would be all right again, ever. He'd been punished much more severely than he'd deserved for what he'd done, but that was **all**. He figured his friends' fathers, **ordinary** fathers, wouldn't have licked him nearly so hard, maybe not even at all. They might have tried to see things from his point-of-view, something he was sure Henry would never be able to do.

"If you're hungry, I could let you have some milk and a slice of bread, perhaps . . ."

"No." Sometimes he wondered if he'd ever be really hungry again.

"Nothing you want, then?"

"Nothing." Indy turned away, looking back out the window.

Henry took a hesitant step toward the boy, then shook his head. Nothing for either of them, it seemed at times.

What did he **want**? Indy was thinking desperately, pulling the dog closer to him for comfort. He wanted his father to come over and put his arms around him and hug him and tell him that everything was okay, that he loved him. But how could he ask for that? There was no way his father would do it; it seemed the only time Henry noticed him anymore was when he'd done something wrong. And then it certainly wasn't the kind of notice he needed and wanted so badly.

Henry cleared his throat, usually preface to something Indy didn't like. "Junior . . ."

What was coming now? "Yes, sir?"

"I think you'd better take the dog outside before I lock up for the night."

"Yes, sir." Indy slipped off the bed, relieved that that was all it was. "C'mon, Indiana."

Henry watched the pair disappear down the upstairs hallway. He wished he knew what to say to the boy, but he **never** seemed to know what to say to him, the boy who looked at him with Elizabeth's eyes. Elizabeth had understood Junior. She could have helped to breach the widening gulf that was coming between them, more every day.

"Oh, Lilibet . . ." he whispered, leaning against the wall. "What do I **do** with the boy?"

Meanwhile, in the front yard, while the dog sniffed out some especially interesting scent in the bushes, Indy stared up at the night sky, at the chilly, far-off stars, trying to find some answers there. He wasn't going to cry anymore; hell, he couldn't even if he wanted to. All the tears had been used up.

"D'you think it'll ever be any different, Indiana?" he asked. "D'you think it'll **ever** be any different?"

23 March, 1991

The Child is Father of the Man

Henry Jones, Sr.

begat

Indiana Jones

begat

James Bond

begat

John Book

begat

William T. O'Niel

begat

Rick Deckard

The Nazi Who Loved Me

by

Rebecca S. Cope

Henry Jones, Sr. couldn't remember when he had felt quite so wonderful. Venice was a city that assaulted the senses with pleasurable sights, sounds, and aromas. He felt invigorated by his surroundings and the people he was working with. Correct that, he noted with an inward smile. It was only one of the people that he admired, and, if the truth were known, it was not because of her scholastic background.

He slid his glasses further down on his nose and peered over them at the beautiful young woman standing in one of the library aisles, engrossed in finding a book. Henry sighed. She was indeed lovely. But she was young, young enough to be his daughter. Hell, she was probably young enough to be his granddaughter. That thought soured his mood a little, and he returned his attention to the book on the table in front of him. The good feeling returned as he stared at the pages and realized once again that he was very close to the culmination of his life's work.

He stole a glance across the library at the window that glowed with multicolored rays of light shining through the stained glass. The window was the key. He knew that if he could decipher the riddle that the window presented, he would find the tomb of Sir Richard. And then it would only be a matter of time until the Grail was his.

Well, not his, really. That honor would go to Walter Donovan who was financing the expedition. But it wasn't really a matter of artifacts anymore. Perhaps at one time, but not now. He had been searching for forty years to find the Holy Grail, and in that time the quest had turned into a crusade. A crusade for what? He wasn't really sure. Knowledge? Understanding? Illumination? All that he knew was that once the Grail was found, his life's work would be complete, and he could finally rest.

He mused a little about that. This search for the Grail had nearly consumed him for most of his life. He had neglected so much for it. He felt a pang of guilt as he thought of his son. He hadn't really seen Junior in months. He couldn't even remember the name of the college where Junior currently taught. That, however, didn't matter; he had it written down somewhere. He didn't have room for life's trivia. But somewhere in the back of his mind, his conscience nagged at him and reminded him that Junior was not one of life's trivia.

Henry shrugged the bothersome thought off and closed his diary. He slipped the well-worn volume into his pocket as the object of his original admiration sauntered sensually across the open space in the center of the library toward his table. He had not allowed any of his colleagues to look at the Grail diary, thinking it a good idea to keep some of the advantage of the expedition to himself. They knew that it existed, because he consulted it frequently, but he insisted on being the sole person to look at it. He had worked too long and too hard to allow some over-zealous associate steal his thunder. He was quite sure that the lovely young woman who now stood before him was ambitious enough to take advantage of any situation that would give her the Grail. Elsa Schneider was gorgeous, but potentially dangerous.

"Henry, I've looked everywhere, but I can't find a reference to the numerals anywhere."

Henry shrugged. "No matter." He started to gather up the other books that lay on the table. "We have plenty of time. Perhaps this is the wrong library."

Elsa sighed and sat down on the edge of the table, swinging her long, elegant legs over one corner. "But I can tell we're so close."

Henry smiled at her. "My dear, I've been 'so close' so many times over the years that I refuse to get excited until I actually see the tomb with my own eyes."

Elsa returned the smile. She had a beautiful smile that was sensual even when she was not trying to be. "I'm sorry. I forget sometimes that you've been looking for the Grail much longer than I have."

Henry leaned a little closer to her, allowing an eyebrow to arch in amusement. "That, dear Elsa, is an understatement." He glanced at the stunning pair of legs that were so close. He wanted to reach out and caress the smooth skin. Dirty old man! he berated himself. Abruptly he stood and picked up the stack of books.

"We're through here for the day. I think this new development needs to be pondered a bit. Maybe a good night's sleep would help."

Elsa nodded as she also stood up. "Perhaps you're right. It's just so frustrating to know that we're so close." She peered at him with curious eyes. "What I don't understand is how you knew about the numerals."

Henry only shrugged. He started walking toward the exit, and Dr. Schneider fell in to step beside him. "Just luck, I guess."

Elsa glanced sideways at him. "With you, Dr. Jones, I believe that this luck you speak of contains years of hard work."

"Very perceptive." He looked over at her, once again marveling at her beauty--tall, slender, blonde. "What plans do you have for dinner?" he asked impulsively.

Elsa smiled. "None, unless you ask," she said coyly.

Henry raised his eyebrows. Was she flirting? "Then I'm asking."

"Then I accept."

"Where would you like to eat?"

Elsa thought for a moment. "I'm getting rather tired of the local restaurants," she said slowly.

"We don't have much choice. Our rooms don't have a kitchen."

The smile reappeared. "I think maybe I have a solution." She slid her arm through his and leaned into him conspiratorially. "You just go back to the apartments, and I'll arrange everything."

"Now you have me curious." He was delighted at the intimacy of her touch and more than a little titillated by her intrigue.

Outside of the library, she gave his hand a little squeeze and went off on her mysterious errand. Henry stood there and watched until she was out of sight. Don't get your hopes up, Henry, old boy, he told himself. Elsa was an attractive young woman who could get any man she wanted. Why would she care about a decrepit old scholar like himself? He squared his shoulders self-consciously, standing a little bit taller and straighter, sucking in his stomach. He wasn't in bad shape for a man in his sixties. But he wasn't in good shape, either. Too many desserts, he reflected wryly. And he thought that his baldness couldn't be very attractive to her, either. He sighed and turned toward their apartments.

Elsa returned a couple of hours later to the suite of rooms that Walter Donovan had rented for the members of the expedition, carrying a twine shopping bag laden with groceries. Henry took her burden from her and set it on the table. He peeked inside and chuckled at what he saw. He pulled out a loaf of bread, a large chunk of cheese, and two bottles of wine.

He grinned at Elsa as he watched her take off her suit jacket. "Well, I see that you believe in eating from the seven basic food groups."

She laughed. "I thought that the wine might loosen up our thinking processes and help us figure out what the numerals mean."

That's not all it might loosen up, Henry thought, but he said, "What about Jacques?"

Jacques Marchand was the third member of the expedition who shared the suite with them. It was a large suite, with two bedrooms and two very large bathrooms, rare for Venice. Jacques and Henry shared one of the bedrooms, while Elsa took the other. At the time, it had been agreed by all that such was the proper arrangement.

Elsa had been in the process of hanging up her jacket. She looked up at Henry in wide-eyed innocence. The corners of her lips quirked into a mischievous grin. "What about him?"

Henry returned the grin. He paused a few seconds before answering. "There doesn't seem to be enough food here for three people." Even though the loaf of bread could have fed six.

Elsa replaced the hanger on the rod and closed the wardrobe door. She turned around, her eyes now purposefully sensual. "Oh, didn't I tell you? Jacques was called away to Rome. On an errand for Walter, he said."

Henry felt a quickening of his pulse. "What kind of errand?"

Elsa shrugged. "He didn't say." She crossed the room to stand across the table from Henry, and smiled beguilingly. "I didn't ask." She unwrapped the bread and cheese and cut slices which she placed on napkins for herself and Henry.

Henry busied himself with opening one of the wine bottles. He was sure now of Elsa's intentions, but was a little puzzled by them. The three of them, he, Jacques, and Elsa, had been working together now for nearly three weeks, and in all that time the lovely Dr. Schneider had expressed no interest in either of them. Why now? Why all of a sudden? And what errand could Jacques have been sent off on so conveniently?

He pulled the cork out of the bottle with a soft pop and removed the corkscrew. He poured the wine into the two tumblers Elsa provided. He glanced at Elsa as she occupied herself with the cheese and bread. What was she up to? Could it really be what it seemed? Henry ruefully decided that it could not. She was after his diary. She was ambitious and shallow and he had no doubt that she would be willing to use her body to obtain what she wanted. Over the years, Henry had run into many young women just like her. And, admittedly, he had given into some. He took in the long sleek curves of her body and sighed. What difference did it really make why she wanted him? he rationalized. This was an opportunity not to be overlooked. Besides, since he was already on to her game, there was no real danger to him. They would have a nice night of physical pleasure, and that would be that. What harm would it do to take advantage of her as she was planning to take advantage of him?

Henry handed one of the tumblers to Elsa, smiling broadly. "What shall we drink to?"

Elsa took the proffered glass and sat down on the couch. She beckoned Henry to sit next to her, which he did quickly. "How about Sir Richard?" she purred, her lips moving alluringly close to his ear.

Henry lifted the glass in salute. "To Sir Richard." He took a large swallow of the tangy liquid.

They then ate the cheese and bread and washed down the bites with generous gulps of wine. They talked about the project, a little bit about Elsa's career as an art historian, and a little about Henry's son, Junior. It was light talk, befitting the mood and wine. And as the evening wore on, Henry could feel the effects of the wine as it warmed his stomach and made his head feel just a little lighter than usual. It was very pleasant. As was Elsa's nearness on the couch. As they talked, she curled her legs beneath her, hiking her skirt above her knees. She would place her hand on Henry's arm as she talked, or maybe his thigh. After a while, she removed the pins from her hair and allowed the blonde curls to cascade freely about her shoulders. Henry felt the pleasantness of arousal stir in him as he returned the intimate contact. He draped one arm across the back of the couch, forcing them to face each other closely. Any more closely, he thought with a rush, and they would be kissing.

"Elsa, you are very beautiful," he said suddenly. He was a little surprised at himself. He had planned to let Elsa make the first move.

She ducked her head coyly. "Thank you," she said softly. "I'm so glad you think so." She looked up again levelly into his eyes.

Those lips, Henry suddenly found himself thinking, were so close. He leaned forward, knowing that she would not move away, but anxious just the same. How odd, he thought in the back of his mind. I'm acting as silly as a schoolboy. Their lips met, tentatively at first, but as Henry allowed his arm to embrace her, and Elsa held his cheeks with both hands, the kiss deepened into passion.

"Henry," Elsa breathed throatily, when they finally parted, "I don't know what is happening to me. I normally don't--"

Henry placed his hand softly over her mouth, annoyed at her playacting. "Shut up," he murmured and swept her into another kiss. They clutched at each other, the touches gradually growing more and more intimate until finally most of their clothing had been unbuttoned, unzipped, and unsnapped and been pushed mostly aside. Henry abandoned himself to the sexual encounter, pushing any nagging doubts aside. She was here, she was now, and she was so very desirable.

Suddenly Henry remembered the diary and pulled his mouth away from one of Elsa's lovely breasts. He had to hide the book before this wily female stole it away from him, probably during feigned post-coital sleep. He sat up on the couch, trying to clear his head, pulling a little at his clothes. Elsa drew back, a look of concern on her flushed face. Was she enjoying this as much as he was? Henry decided for the sake of his vanity that she was.

"Henry, what's wrong?"

He didn't know quite what to say. "Let's go in the bedroom."

She smiled. "But the couch will work just as well."

That was certainly true, he thought to himself. "Uh--I'm just a bit old-fashioned. I would really feel more comfortable in a bed."

Elsa nodded understandingly, still smiling. "Then let's not delay, **Liebchen**."

Henry allowed her to go first in a broad gesture of gallantry, but the moment her back was turned to him, he looked about hurriedly for a place to hide the diary. The minute he fell asleep, he had no doubt that she would ransack his clothing for the book, and, not finding it, would turn the apartment inside out.

Elsa turned and saw him still standing at the couch. "Henry?"

Henry started pulling up his trousers. "Uh--it's hard to walk with my pants around my knees."

"Take them off," she cooed.

"Yes."

"I'll wait for you in the bedroom." She blew him a seductive kiss and disappeared.

Henry looked around worriedly. Where wouldn't she look? The sofa cushions? The vase? The wardrobe? Suddenly his eyes fell to the half loaf of bread on the table. She couldn't possibly think of that. He quickly hollowed out the half-loaf and slipped the diary inside. He replaced a carefully torn hunk of bread on the end and laid the loaf back on the table. He finished removing his trousers and started for the door, before casting one last glance at the table. It would have to do. Elsa was waiting for him.

It was as he had expected. When he had pretended to drift off in to sleep, he had felt Elsa slip out of bed and disappear into the living room. He could hear her searching, at first slowly, and then gradually more frantically. He smiled grimly to himself in satisfaction. His lovely Elsa was indeed predictable. He wondered what new ploy she would try when her search remained a failure. He felt sorry for her in a way. Her desperation for academic achievement was sad and misplaced. He had known too many others like her, mostly young men, who would employ any means, legal or not, to obtain the recognition they thought they needed. If she found the diary and used it without consulting him, she would no doubt gain the accolades she so seemed to crave. A small part of him rationalized about what would be so wrong with her finding the Grail--the part of him no doubt still glowing from her sensual touches. The rest of him knew that the only person who should find the Grail was him. He had spent his life searching for it. It was his diary and his right.

After nearly a half-hour, Henry heard the bedroom door open and felt Elsa slip into bed beside him. He casually shifted and draped an arm around her waist as if still asleep. He could tell from the stiffness of her body that she was angry and frustrated. With a cold satisfaction, he allowed himself to finally fall asleep.

Henry wasn't quite sure what had awakened him at first. But as he lay there in the darkness, trying to clear the sleep from his head, he could hear the murmurs clearly. He looked at the woman next to him. Elsa was talking in her sleep. It took him even a few more moments to realize she was speaking in German.

Henry was quite fluent in many languages, including Latin. He was one of the few people who could carry on a conversation in the dead language. Languages seemed to come easily to him, and he considered German one of the easier tongues of the world. He lay there, listening to her soft voice, sometimes incoherent, sometimes slurred, but always audible. She was rambling on about someone named Franz, telling him to stop doing something. Henry wondered idly if this were some former lover. Her ramblings continued, Franz figuring greatly in her dreams. Henry had almost drifted back to sleep himself when the content of her murmurings changed abruptly. Henry jerked back to full alertness with a shock.

"**Mein Führer**," she was saying, "I will have the diary from that foolish old man very soon."

Henry sat up and stared at her in alarm as she babbled away in German.

"Franz, Hitler has promised me an appointment in Berlin! I will be famous! The Grail. I will find the Grail, and I will give it to our **Führer** and we will be famous."

Henry felt the blood drain from his face. She was a Nazi! This lovely young woman was a goose-stepping, Jew-hating Nazi! He felt sick to his stomach as he contemplated this new development.

The Nazis were an evil force; Henry had become convinced of that long ago. The more he read the daily headlines, filled with war and racial hatred, the more that view crystallized in to a certainty that Adolf Hitler was a man to be greatly feared. Now, here was one of his loyal followers, plotting to steal his diary, so that she could present this madman with one of the world's holiest objects. And he knew he could not let that happen. The Grail, he was sure, possessed a supernatural power, a gift from the lips of Christ. Should such a power fall into the hands of Hitler, there was no telling what amount of human suffering the man could cause. An entire race wiped out, the domination of the world, the subjugation of humanity to slavery.

He slipped out of bed and reached quietly for his clothes. He had to get that diary, he thought frantically. And it was no longer for the pathetic reason of protecting the Grail discovery for himself. Suddenly that no longer mattered. It was not important who found the Grail, just as long as the Grail was not delivered into Hitler's hands. But how could he prevent that? As long as the diary remained in Venice, there was always the danger that Elsa would find it. Or perhaps Jacques, whom Henry now became convinced was part of Elsa's hideous plot.

He closed Elsa's bedroom door behind him and rapidly got dressed. He could see little evidence of her earlier search, but he knew with certainty that it had taken place. His heart thudded dully within his chest as he reached for the half-loaf of bread, praying silently that she had not found his little hiding place. As he hefted the bread, he let out a sigh, knowing from the weight that the book was still there. She had overlooked it. He dug open the loaf and grasped the well-worn tome with a new found determination. But now what? He couldn't keep hiding the diary in the loaf, that much was certain. But where could he hide it? He realized with a sinking certainty that it would not be safe anywhere in Venice.

He had to get it out of the city. But how, without Elsa knowing? He sat down on the couch and pondered the problem. He noticed idly that dawn was beginning to creep through the drapes into the room. Elsa would be waking soon.

As if on cue, he heard bath water being turned on in Elsa's bathroom, and his head jerked toward the door in fear. He shoved the diary into the cushions, but Elsa did not appear. He could hear her humming through the door, preparing for her bath.

What could he do? He had to think! Stop panicking and think, old boy, he scolded himself. Suddenly, his eyes fell on the brown paper that had once covered the bread, and an idea formed in his head. That was it! But he had to hurry.

He got up and grabbed the paper and diary and quickly wrapped the book within the brown wrapping. He tore the twine shopping bag apart with Elsa's bread knife and wrapped a piece of twine around his package and shoved the remains of the bag behind the couch.

Dear God, where had he put Junior's address? A momentary flash of panic filled him until he remembered that he had written it in a notebook in his valise. He hurried into his room, grabbing the bag eagerly, tossing the contents carelessly onto the floor until he found the notebook. He opened it with shaking fingers, conscious that Elsa's bath could not last forever. Junior, Junior, Junior . . . Where the hell had he written down that address? Ah, here it was. Barnett College, Barnett, New York. He scrawled his son's name across the front of the package. Now to post it!

"Henry?"

Henry jerked upright in fear and shock as he heard Elsa's voice outside the door. He tucked the diary into his pocket nervously. "What?" He winced. His voice sounded as nervous as he was.

"Henry, are you all right?"

"Uh--I'm getting dressed. Don't come in!"

There was an amused chuckle outside the door. "Don't you think after last night modesty is unnecessary?"

Henry rolled his eyes, realized just how stupid he had sounded. "Just a minute," he stalled. He shoved the notebook and papers and a few clothes back into the bag and pushed his umbrella through the handles. Maybe he could fool Elsa into thinking the book was in his case. It might distract her enough to give him a chance to mail the diary later. It was flimsy, but it was worth a try. He gathered what little dignity he had remaining and opened the bedroom door.

She stood there. Stark naked. He blinked in shock.

She laughed, looking at the bag. "Are you going some place?"

His pried his eyes from her chest to her face. "To the library. These are my papers."

She laughed again. "Henry, the library won't be open for another two hours. Don't you think there's some other way we could spend our time before then?" She draped her arms around his neck and moved closer to him, stopped by the valise in front of him. "Why don't we just get rid of this little item for a while and come into my room." She lifted the case from his hands and threw it casually on the couch, but Henry could see the interest in her eyes as she watched it land there. "Now, then, isn't that better?" She pressed herself against him, kissing his neck, nibbling at his ear, pulling toward the bedroom.

More than anything, Henry did not feel like making love to this woman. But he knew that he had to, to keep up appearances, and besides at least he'd know where she was at all times. He sighed and gave into her kisses. All he had to do now was wait for an opportunity to post the package.

Several hours later, they were once more at the library. Henry had sent Elsa on a number of fool's errands during the morning, but each time she had returned too quickly for him to slip out and mail the diary. It wasn't warm in the library, but he was starting to sweat. He pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead. He took out his pocket watch and glanced at the time. Past one. He was starting to worry that he would not be able to complete his plan.

"There is nothing in the archives, Henry," Elsa said as she approached the table where Henry sat.

He jumped nervously at the sound of her voice, looking guiltily up in to her face. "As I said before, perhaps we have the wrong library."

Elsa once again propped herself on the table in front of him. "I was so hopeful about this place." She gazed down at him with a small frown. "I thought you had discovered it from your diary."

Henry felt like fainting. She was trying to draw him out. "No, I only knew about the numerals," he lied. "The library was just a guess." He reached over to the chair next to him and fingered the valise's handle. He watched Elsa's eyes flicker to observe his movement. Good. She still believed that the diary was in the case. "Why don't we go to lunch?"

Elsa nodded enthusiastically. "I know just the place . . ."

"No," Henry interrupted quickly. "I want to take you to a little cafe I discovered." Near the post office, he added to himself.

She raised her eyebrows questioningly, but capitulated gracefully. They walked out of the library, Henry careful to carry the case with him, to continue the ruse. They walked for several blocks, Henry valiantly trying to keep up with Elsa's chatter. He had to admit that she was much better at this intrigue that he was. But he knew that for the sake of the future of humanity that he had to keep up with her.

Once at the cafe, an enchanting little outdoor restaurant with brightly colored tablecloths and tuxedoed waiters, they ordered from a small menu. Elsa seemed impressed with the place, and Henry started to relax a little. They continued their idle conversation until the food came.

"Oh, my!" Henry suddenly exclaimed.

Elsa looked up at him in alarm. "What's wrong?"

"I forgot that I was expecting a package from Walter. He said it could be important." Henry stood and brushed himself off. "I really do have to nip over to the post office for just a moment. I'll be right back."

He could tell that Elsa was confused by this sudden announcement, but he could also tell that she didn't mind. It would give her an opportunity to rummage through his bag. "Hurry back," was all she said.

Henry quickly threaded his way between the crowded tables out to the sidewalk. Just before he turned to walk toward the post office, he looked back at the table. Elsa waved at him cheerily. He returned the wave half-heartedly and hastened to his destination.

The ancient, moldy stone building that was the post office was only two blocks down from the cafe. Henry knew that Elsa could probably see him from her seat, which would be to his advantage. She couldn't start ransacking his valise until he was out of sight in the building. He prayed this wasn't some obscure saint's day and that the post office would be open. As he reached the door, he breathed a sigh of relief. It was open. But when he entered the lobby, the relief vanished. There was only one window open, and the line stretched clear across the lobby. Dear God! Would he be able to post the package before Elsa found out that the diary wasn't in the valise and finally figure out his plan? He took his place impatiently at the end of the line and pulled out his pocket watch.

The line moved like all lines in Italy. Slowly. Henry fidgeted anxiously, checking his watch every few minutes. He kept watching the door, expecting to see Elsa's face any moment. He peered around the people in front of him to see what was holding up the line. But it was to no avail. The line moved no faster.

Five minutes, then ten. Henry was now next in line. He felt as if he were ready to jump out of his skin. Elsa, he knew, would not wait much longer for him. And then he was at the window.

"I want to mail this to America," he told the clerk fluently in Italian.

The civil servant seemed to ignore him for a moment as he rearranged a stack of papers.

"I said, I want to post this package to America," Henry repeated impatiently

The clerk looked up disdainfully. "I heard you. You must wait your turn."

Henry's eyebrows shot up in surprise as he involuntarily looked around him. "It **is** my turn, you dolt!"

This made the clerk angry, and he glared at Henry stubbornly. "I'll get to you when I'm ready."

Henry felt like crawling through the window and strangling the surly little man. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a wad of bills. "Just tell me how much. Please. This is important."

With a heavy sigh, the man reached for the package. At the same moment, Henry caught a glimpse of movement out of the corner of his eye. He turned to see Elsa approaching him. And she was not alone. Two big, brawny men followed in her wake, one of them carrying the valise. This was it, Henry knew. There would be no more charades. He shoved the package through the window and then pushed the wad of bills into the clerk's hand. "I'm sure that's enough!"

The man gaped at the money in his hand. "This is too much--"

"Keep it!" Henry rasped and walked away from the window to face Elsa.

She was flushed with anger, her face cold and icy. "You stupid idiot. You mailed it, didn't you?"

Henry smiled. "Yes."

"That won't do you any good," Elsa fumed.

"Where it's going you'll never find it."

"Don't count on it, you foolish old man." She looked as if she were ready to hit him. Obviously exerting great self-control, she gradually calmed herself. "I don't know how you found out, but I assure you that your petty heroics are for nothing. We will find that diary."

"No, you won't."

"Then you will tell us where it is going."

"And how do you propose to make me?"

Elsa stared at him coldly before motioning to the two goons behind her. They came around her to stand on either side of Henry, each grabbing one of his arms as unobtrusively as the crowd in the post office would permit. "Dr. Jones, you will rue the day that you ever tried to cross the Third Reich."

Henry stared levelly back at her suddenly, calm now that the diary was out of his hands. He knew that without the diary, no one would be even close to the clues that would lead to the Grail. And he further knew that even should they accidentally stumble upon the hiding place, the clues contained in the diary were necessary to safely gain access to it. He felt suddenly incredibly confident.

"And you, Dr. Schneider, are already ruing the day you tried to cross a Jones."

Her control snapped, and she slapped him viciously across the face. The post office crowd murmured and stared, but no one came to Henry's aid. Elsa turned abruptly on her heel and marched toward the door. The two thugs pulled Henry after her. When they reached the street, he was hustled into a waiting boat, his valise thrown in after him. Elsa gave the waiting driver instructions as the two guards got in on either side of their prisoner. Elsa stood back as the boat sped off.

Henry gazed at Elsa's retreating figure. He began to feel some fear as to his personal fate, but he remained confident about the Grail. Junior would protect it. And that was all that was important.

Fedora

by

Renée Schiber

It was one of the rare moments in the life of Indiana Jones when he wished he were back at Marshall teaching his classes rather than out in the field doing the thing he loved best. He had followed a lot of dead ends and red herrings which had ultimately led him to this dingy cantina on the coast of Ecuador. He didn't even know what province he was in, and, at the moment, he didn't care. His only consolation was that this was a local establishment where everyone minded his own business and left him alone, something for which he was very grateful.

The late afternoon air laden with heat, humidity, and a variety of unpleasant odors weighed down on his shoulders. As he lazily waved his hand in front of his face in a vain attempt to disperse the swarm of gnats that hovered about his head, he shuddered. Despite the suffocating heat, he had shivered. Back in Connecticut, autumn had just arrived, and the fall semester was well underway. Indy had hoped that he would be back in time for midterms, but there seemed scant likelihood of that now. By midterm that idiot teaching assistant would have inflicted too much damage for even the redoubtable Dr. Jones to repair.

His gaze drifted down to the glass he clutched tightly between his hands. Indy wondered if he would get the runs again. Staring at the brown liquor in the clean-looking glass, he decided he didn't care and raised the vessel to his lips.

"What the fuck," he muttered to himself and downed the throat-searing drink with a gulp.

"I'll drink to that," a familiar voice proclaimed just before a heavy hand slapped Indy on the shoulder.

Every muscle in Indy's body tensed in reaction to the assault, and he had to repress the impulse to swing around and bust his assailant right in the chops. Instead, he remained perfectly still and waited.

With a weighty hand still on Indy's shoulder, the stranger spoke again, his soft drawl barely discernible. "I would have thought that by now you would have bought a new hat, kid."

A slow smile softened Indy's harsh expression and his attitude. "I'll be damned. I shoulda figured that you'd be in on this," he said as he turned toward the man standing beside him.

No matter how intense the professional rivalry between the two of them had become, Indy always the relished the moments when he saw his old friend again. "I **got** a new hat," Indy told him as he looked into the piercing blue eyes partially hidden by a brown Fedora. "I wear it on Sundays."

"To church, no doubt."

Both men stared at each other for a moment, then started laughing loudly.

"Right," agreed Indy as he indicated to the man in the Fedora that he should take the vacant seat next to him. "So what brings you to this part of the world, Bobby Mack Fo--"

"Come on, Henry Jones"--Bobby Mack leaned forward to put more emphasis on the last word he spoke--"Junior."

"Awright. Okay. You made your point, Bob. You don't have to get vicious."

Bob laughed.

Indy peered at his empty glass. "You still haven't answered my question."

Bob beckoned the bartender. "I know."

As Bob talked with the local, Indy said, "Could it be we're after the same thing? Again?"

Bob watched for a moment as the drinks were poured. Smiling slyly, he raised his glass toward Indy. "What makes you think that?"

Indy picked up the other glass. "Because I know you. Suddenly a lot of mysteries aren't so mysterious anymore. How much did you pay those people back in Mocoa to give me all that bullshit and that phony map?"

"It's not like you to blame others for your failures, Henry--sorry--Indy."

"Only when others are to blame."

Bob chuckled. "And you fell for it, too."

"I don't think it's very goddamn' funny. I could have been back in Connecticut by now."

"You're so anxious to get back to that stuffy little office and those dingy classrooms?"

"Maybe."

Bob drank his liquor and ordered more. "Liar."

Indy quickly finished his drink, and the bartender filled his glass while he was there. "You think you know me pretty well," he said dryly.

"I know you better than your father does."

Indy smiled ruefully. "That's not too hard."

"There were times-- You know those times when you're out in the field all alone, nothing but foreigners around, and you wish you could talk to somebody you knew?"

Indy nodded.

"Sometimes--sometimes I used to wish I had a kid like you. In fact, I used to sort of imagine that you **were** my kid, and I could take you along on all my hare-brained travels."

"That's funny." Indy looked into the other's face. "There were a lot of times when I used to wish that you were my dad."

"What're you gonna do next, Indiana?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?" Indy replied sharply, if not too originally.

Bob shrugged. "You better move fast. That French bastard's been asking around."

"Belloq? I heard he went back to France."

"I heard it, too, but that son-of-a-bitch **never** gives up."

"My sources are pretty reliable."

"Like your sources at Mocoa?"

Indy grumbled, but said nothing out loud.

Bob looked over his shoulder toward the doorway of the cantina just as the illuminating sun was eclipsed by the arrival of a small group of men. Indy turned to see some sort of local bureaucrat accompanied by four armed guards.

"Sorry, Indy," Bob said as the group approached them directly.

Indy stood up when he saw the armed contingent surrounding him. "What is this?"

Bob rose and moved in front of Indy who was red with rage. "This is a going-away party. I'm going away, and you're not." And he smiled, almost apologetically, at the archaeologist.

"How much did you pay them?" Indy hissed.

"Pay? I just told Señor Arguello that you might be trying to smuggle artifacts out of this lovely little country. I believe that it's some kind of violation of some law about preserving antiquities. Not being a college man like

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yourself, perfesser, I'm just not all that sure."

In spite of his anger, Indy nearly laughed. "Don't give me that crap. Getting me locked up won't give you much of a head start. I've got the only extant map."

Bob shrugged. "All I need is a few days." He turned to Arguello. "You better check his pockets. I think he's carrying a gun."

The small, mustachioed bureaucrat unleashed a spate of clipped Spanish, and one of the guards searched Indy until he found the revolver. As Señor Arguello began to read the charges in fluent English, Indiana leaned toward Bob through the circle of armed guards. "I'll get you, you son-of-a-bitch."

"After I've been to Peru and picked up a certain trinket made of solid gold. See you on the lecture circuit, Dr. Jones."

The guns pointed at him kept Indy from leaping the other man right there. With the barrels of four rifles staring him in the face, Indy could subdue his passions rather quickly. He eyed his adversary coldly. "You may make it to Peru before I do, Forrestal, but you won't get the idol. You don't even have a map."

"Yes, but I speak Hovitos," Forrestal said smoothly, then laughed as the gendarmes herded Indy out of the cantina and into the street.

Indy shouted over his shoulder just before he was pushed into the sunlit street. "We'll see who's laughing the next time we meet."

The only response Indy heard as he was led away from the tavern was the sound of Forrestal's continuing laughter. For a moment, he was transported many years into the past. The steady voice with the faint twang was once again saying to a very defeated Indiana Jones: "You lost today, kid, but that doesn't mean you hafta like it."

Author's Note:

This story, which originally appeared in the one-shot fanzine **Tales for the Telling**, edited by Ty Barrett, was the first piece of my fanfiction to be published. In the intervening eight years, a lot of things have happened, but I like to think the story stands the test of time, and I hope new readers will still find it entertaining. I'm very pleased that Samia has given it this opportunity to find a new audience of fan readers.

My Aunt Rosemary died last year, after a long and eventful life. She leaves behind a legacy of tales, many involving a certain archaeologist. I asked her once--tactfully, of course, because she was already at an age when many of her old friends had passed away--if she still heard from him. She just smiled.

Last summer, while I was going through some of her things I came across her collection of Christmas cards, all neatly bundled and labeled by year. As I flipped through the last packet, those marked 1989, I found the one I had, however unconsciously, been looking for. There was no return address, but the bold scrawl of the simple signature was unmistakable:

Indy

Karen Ripley--March, 1991

Summer Session

by

Karen Ripley

In 1924, I was a student at the University of Chicago, majoring in sociology. That summer between my sophomore and junior years I took an interim field course in archaeology, taught by Professor Abner Ravenwood. We took part in a cooperative dig with the University of Wisconsin in south-central Wisconsin excavating the burial sites of the mound-building Indians of the central woodlands. That site is some kind of state park or something now, I guess. At that time, it was nothing more than a glorified cow pasture! There were sixteen of us on the dig, seven from the UW and nine of us from Chicago, including Abner and his assistant, a graduate student named Indiana Jones. Oh, you've heard of him, eh? Well, let me tell you, he wasn't much to look at then: a tall, gangly fella with a horrid little mustache and a big mouth. Dr. Jones--what a hot-shot archaeologist! Technically, he wasn't even a "Doctor" yet, since he was still working on his dissertation, but Abner informally accorded him the title. Maybe it was Abner's way of poking some gentle fun at Jones--not that Jones would have noticed. He was a thin, dour young man, and entirely serious.

Abner Ravenwood--now there was a **real** man! He was gorgeous; big, broad-shouldered, yet soft-spoken, with jet black hair and a luxurious full beard. And the fact that he was a widower with a young daughter didn't decrease his attractiveness one iota. I'll confess he was the reason this sociology major was on an archaeological dig. I had a severe, unilateral crush on Abner Ravenwood.

What a summer it was! We spent day after day hunched over those dusty mounds, picking through the dirt with our spatulas and brushes. Each night, we caravanned back to the UW at Whitewater in our wheezing, university-issued sedans and collapsed in our temporary quarters in the dorms. Somehow the course description ("Archaeology 104: Summer Field Dig . . .") had made the dig sound like an exotic and romantic way to earn humanities credits. What the dig turned out to be was an excellent way to get dirty fingernails and a sunburnt back! Oh, not that I was bored; there was Abner, after all, irresistable in his broad-brimmed hat and rolled-up shirtsleeves. But it was hard, tedious work and considerably less "romantic" than I had hoped.

The last days of the semester approached, and we began our final cataloging. One muggy August morning, I saw Abner in earnest conference with Jones at the edge of our excavation. Then they walked over to where the rest of us had begun our daily sifting. Everyone looked up from where they were squatting or kneeling in the warm dust as Abner made his announcement.

"Ladies and gents, we only have a week left, and I'd really like it if we could get over to the Tarkington site, too. If we can wrap it up here this morning, we can get in nearly a full day's work yet over at the Tark. That'll give us a week there, anyway."

A little cheer went up. We knew nothing about the Tarkington site, be we knew more than we cared to about **this** one. We had been planting our dirty little knees and pants-seats on it for the entire summer.

"I want to send a couple of students along with Dr. Jones on a trace," Abner continued. "The rest of us will meet you at the Tark before nightfall."

A few hands shot up--not mine! While a "trace" might sound like some sort of exciting, counter-intelligence maneuver, what it really was was a heck of a long walk. The two excavation sites were eight or nine miles apart. Abner had always held the conviction that there must be more mounds somewhere between, connecting the two digs. The trace was basically a cross-country hike, surveying the landscape for mound-like configurations. You see, many of the mounds were immense, but their surfaces were eroded and overgrown to a point where it was hard to distinguish a mound from a natural land formation.

"Okay," Abner was saying, pointing to one eager student, "Rico, you go."

Another student was on her feet, wildly waving her arms. "Dr. Ravenwood! I want to go!"

Everyone laughed. Wendy Schauer definitely wanted to go! She was long-legged, buxom blonde with stunningly regular white teeth like piano keys. She also had an acute case of the hots for Indiana Jones. Wendy's formidable bustline was the envy of every girl on the dig. "Bosom or brains--every woman gets just one," your grandpa used to say. I suspect he was just trying to console me.

Abner cleared his throat and waved his arm in my direction. "Uh--Rosemary, you go."

"Me?" I popped up. "I don't know anything about surveying!"

"Neither does Wendy!" someone else hooted.

Abner crossed his forearms, terminating all debate. "Dr. Jones will get together what you need. You can leave right away."

I trudged across the sandy flat, throwing Abner a mournful look. I wanted to spend all of my remaining few days with **him**, not with that scrawny graduate student. But I suspect Abner knew all along where my affections lay, just as he knew where Wendy's did. Abner was no fool.

For all the good it would have done Wendy, she could just as well have gone along on the trace. Her "mounds" were not the kind Indiana Jones was interested in, if you know what I mean. He was passionately concerned with only one thing: archaeology. Now he quickly and methodically assembled our equipment while the other volunteer student and I exchanged bemused looks.

Despite his name, Rico was not a Latino. He was a serious-looking, brown-haired young man with wire-rimmed glasses and baggy trousers. He was a UW student. Every time I had noticed him all summer--which was not often--he had been studiously bent over some little pebble or shard of pottery as absorbed as if he were personally unearthing King Tut's treasures. I think someone had told me he was an art major.

Jones suddenly looked up. "Can you read a compass?" he asked Rico. When Rico nodded, Jones dropped the instrument into his hands. His first words to me were, "Is that what you're wearing?"

I looked down at my usual dig attire--a loose, short-sleeved cotton blouse, knee-length khaki shorts, and ankle-high boots. "What's wrong with it?" I asked.

Jones just snorted, shaking his head. He thrust a loaded backpack at me and another at Rico. Then he shouldered his own pack--twice the size of ours--and headed for the trees.

"Indiana!" Abner called.

Jones paused impatiently, turning toward Abner.

"We'll meet you at the Tark. Be there by sundown. Don't spend time investigating; if you find something promising, just mark the charts. No exploring!"

Jones gave a little grunt and started up the slope again. Rico and I trotted along in his wake, our canteens banging. It was a hot, humid day, typical Wisconsin August weather. Even in the shade of the trees, the air felt close, like in a steam room. Clouds of gnats buzzed up around us. Within ten minutes, the straps of the backpack had cut ruts in my shoulders, and I felt like its weight had tripled. The land was hilly and mostly wooded, but that darned Jones could cover ground like a Missouri trotter. Rico and I were constantly struggling to keep up with him. And he didn't say a word. He just kept on tracking.

Once in a while, Jones would pause and consult his topography charts or take a quick elevation reading, jotting down the figures in a dog-eared notebook. Once he asked Rico for the compass. Then he would wipe his shirtsleeve across his perspiring face and continue at his prodigious pace.

I was beginning to understand Jones's contempt for my clothing. The branches and brambles had scratched my bare arms, and my lower legs were peppered with welts from weeds and insect bites. Several times Rico slowed down to accommodate me, and when I caught up with him he would smile sympathetically at me and make quizzical but covert little "you-know-how-he-is" gestures towards our fearless leader. Fearless leader? Hah! I thought he was a self-centered clod!

At last, when we had been walking for nearly three hours, Jones stopped to rest. To my surprise, he casually distributed a couple of candy bars to each of us and then chatted equanimically with Rico about the UW football team while we ate. I was too tired to be irritated at the way he excluded me. I gulped down some tepid water from my canteen, gnawed my candy bars, and scratched my mosquito bites.

We were sitting in the middle of a large wooded area surrounded by mature trees and a dense growth of underbrush. There seemed to be little or no secondary growth. I was puzzling over this when I noticed the mulberry trees. Now it made sense: this was an abandoned farm site, although God knew how long ago any house or buildings had rotted to the ground.

Abruptly, Jones was on his feet again, shouldering his backpack.

"Come on, men!" I whispered sarcastically to Rico, but Jones didn't notice. He was already starting to wedge his way through the next stand of brush. As we struggled to catch up to him, a random thought kept niggling at me. Finally, spontaneously, I said it out loud.

"Dr. Jones, I don't think we should go this way."

He never paused, never even turned his head. "Yeah? And why not?"

I got the "Because--" part out, that was all, before suddenly we all were falling, the three of us plummeting in a hail of brush and dirt and dead leaves. It was one of those moments that seem to play in slow motion; we were falling forever. The landing, however, came soon enough! I felt like someone had run over me with a loaded hay wagon and left it parked on top of me, crushing every molecule of air out of my lungs. Gasping for breath, I inhaled dust and bits of dead leaves and half of Indiana Jones's hair. Someone groaned--maybe it was even me. In a haze of suspended dirt and chaff, I stared dazedly around me.

"Dr. Jones? Rico?"

"Jesus--Rosemary!"

"Dr. Jones! Are you all right?"

He coughed, then thrashed somewhere beneath me. "I will be," he grunted, "as soon as you get your elbow out of my crotch!"

I shook free of a tangle of dead branches and weeds and rolled awkwardly off of him. As Jones staggered to his knees, shaking himself like a wet retriever, I saw the blue fabric of Rico's shirt below him. We both pawed frantically at the debris covering Rico's back. Rico was still--too still--and his right leg was bent in a way that legs just don't bend.

Rico moaned as Jones carefully rolled him over and onto his back. When Jones straightened Rico's leg, there was a sharp crack, like the sound of a dog crunching a chicken bone. "I think it's broken," Jones announced. No kidding! He turned to me. "Do you still have your canteen?"

I groped through the dead leaves and came up with the strap of my somewhat dented canteen. I was starting to feel like I had a somewhat dented head to match. Jones sloshed a little water on Rico's forehead and brushed the wet hair back off his face. Rico groaned, and his eyes blinked open. He reached clumsily for his dripping forehead.

"You okay, kid?" Jones asked. "Your head hurt?"

"No, just my leg. What the heck happened, Dr. Jones?"

Jones glanced around us. "We fell into some kind of pit."

"It's a well!" I interrupted, starting to feel rankled. "I tried to warn you, but you wouldn't stop!"

Jones stared at me. "A well? What the hell would a well be doing way out--"

"Didn't you notice the mulberry trees? This was an old farmstead. When you headed into the brush, you were headed right across the old pumpyard."

He was still staring at me. "How the hell--"

Furious, I batted a clot of dead leaves out of my hair. "Don't you know **anything**?" I fumed.

Rico, white-faced, was trying to sit up. Jones helped him get his back against the crumbling, moss-covered wall. Rico stared up at the tiny, distant circle of the green branches and blue sky, seemingly miles above us. "Dr. Jones, how are we going to get out of here?" he asked.

"Ask Rosemary!" the other retorted. "She knows **everything**!"

We glared at each other, but Rico kept out of it. He still considered Jones our leader, and he looked to him for the solution. Jones dragged aside some of the broken branches and weeds and wreckage of broken boards from the rotted wellcap. Then he paced the diameter of our little prison, surveying the situation.

The well floor was about eight or nine feet across, but the walls sloped slightly inward as they rose. At the top, the hole we had so unceremoniously crashed through was only four or five feet across. Luckily, the well was dry--or we all would have been wishing we'd majored in swimming rather than the social sciences. The brick walls were slimy and eroded. Although I would guess the depth of the well to have been forty or forty-five feet, it may just as well have been forty or forty-five **miles** for all the good it did us.

Suddenly Jones stirred into action. He gathered all three backpacks and, pulling out his pocketknife, began to slash the canvas and cut off the straps. I just stared at him, refusing to reveal any curiosity or ignorance about what he had in mind. He started to fling the torn strips of canvas at my feet. "Here, tie these together," he growled at me. "Rico, think you can spare that sweatshirt?"

Puzzled, Rico unknotted the sleeves from around his neck and tossed the shirt to Jones. "What are you going to do?"

"Make a rope and get us out of here," Jones replied, attacking the sweatshirt with his knife.

"Any idea of how you're going to get this rope of yours to the top of this little pothole?" I asked sarcastically, jerking the strips together with square knots.

Jones lifted his head just long enough to give me a withering stare. "Don't have to," he grunted. "I'm going to get **this** to the top first." He fished through the pile of equipment that had been in his backpack and held up a cylindrical metal case. He cracked it open, and a coil of dusty string popped out: his chalkline.

"Oh, I see," Rico said excitedly. "If you can get that string up to the top and hooked over something, you can use it to--"

"To pull the rope up," Jones finished, a self-satisfied look on his face.

"**If** you can get the string to the top," I added, "and **if** you have enough rope to reach that far and **if** it doesn't break!"

"I knew you'd love it!" Jones started to rip savagely into his own jacket.

"I think it's a great idea," Rico offered placatingly, starting to wriggle out of his shirt.

But Jones held up his hand. "Keep the shirt, Rico. Let's hope we don't need it."

Ten minutes later, with a pile of crudely knotted rope at his feet, Jones unwound his chalkline. He searched the littered floor of the well until he found a stone that suited his purpose. Then, tying the end of the line around the stone, he began his first in a series of wildly unsuccessful attempts to loop the string over a branch at the top of the well.

I know it sounds simple, but it was one of those theoretically easy things that was hellishly complex in practice. Standing at the bottom of the well and trying to toss a rock straight up to the top was hard enough; when you added a string to the rock and tried to flip it over a tree branch, it started to look downright impossible. One particularly strenuous maneuver found the chalkline tangled in the bushes at the well's lip. I held my breath as Jones patiently tugged it free, afraid he would break that fragile string that seemed to have become, literally, our lifeline.

Frustrated and sweating, Jones finally slumped against the damp brick wall. "What it needs is a little more push," he mused, wiping his forehead. His eyes roved around the little chamber. Suddenly, he stooped and snatched up a forked branch, triumphantly holding it aloft. "A slingshot!"

"How are you going to make a slingshot without a rubber band?" I asked him skeptically.

"We don't need a rubber band; all we need is something that stretches." He was staring fixedly at my inconsiderable bosom. I began to blush furiously. "Say, Rosemary, I don't suppose . . . ?"

"No!" I snapped, glaring at him and crossing my arms across my chest. "I'm not wearing one!" Damn that man! Abner had never noticed--week after week of warm summer days in my prettiest cotton blouses--and now here was that damned Indiana Jones, ogling my-- Oh, I could have **slugged** him!

Poor Rico was helpless. "What else has elastic in it?" he asked hopefully.

"Underwear!" I thundered, pointing an accusing finger at Jones. Now it was his turn to color! He ducked his head and muttered something. "What?" I demanded, enjoying his discomfort immensely.

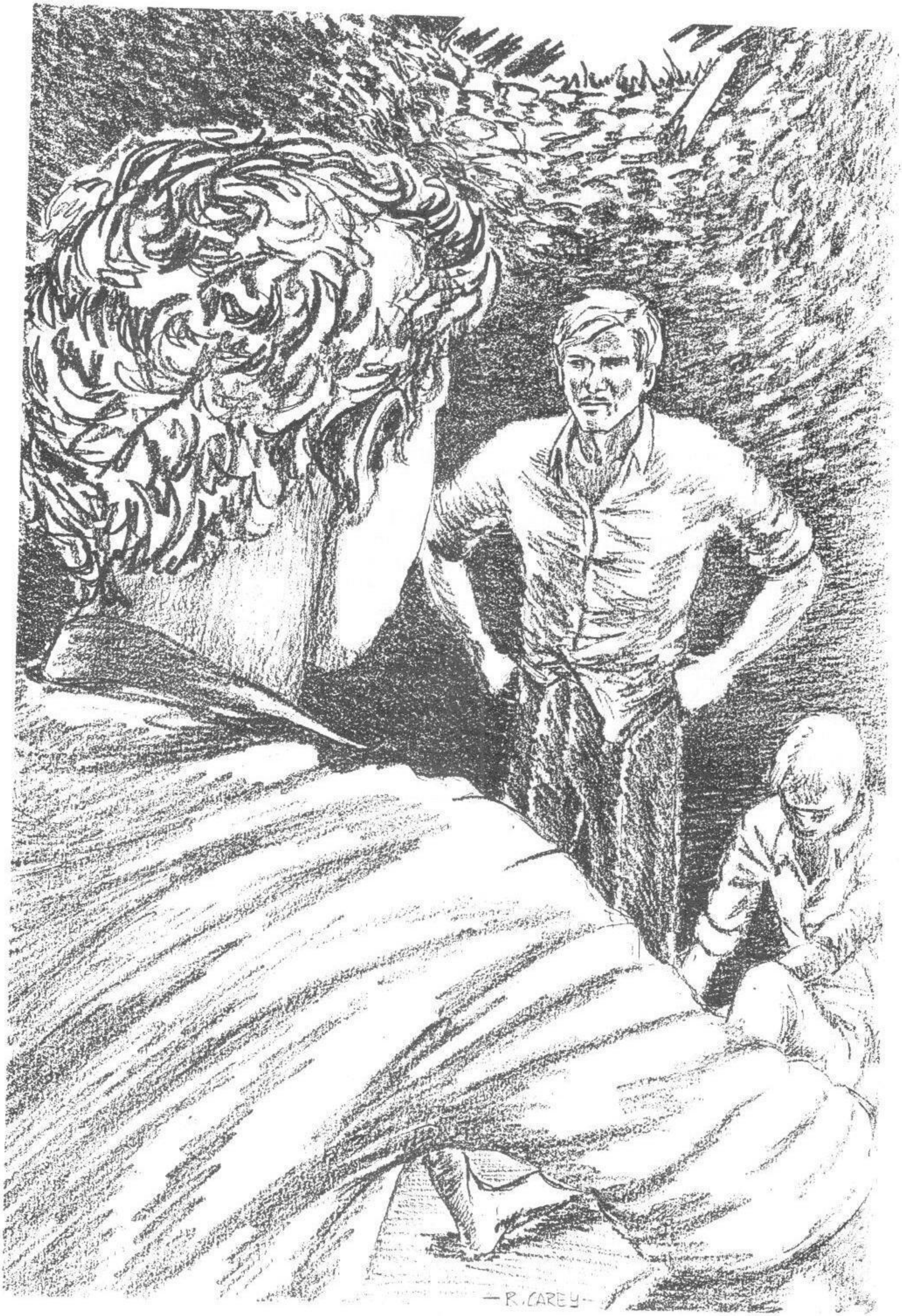
"I said, I'm not **wearing** any!"

Again we were squared off, staring fiercely at each other like two roosters in a henyard. I wondered if I looked as dirty and ratty as he did, covered with dirt and sweat and bits of chaff. I almost laughed aloud at the thought. I guess I did probably grin a little.

"Well, luckily I am," I announced levelly, making truce. "Give me your knife, and I'll cut off the waistband."

Jones looked at me peculiarly, but handed me the knife.

"Turn your back--don't look," I insisted. I don't know whether he looked or not, because I turned my back, too. I pulled down my shorts and clumsily


R. CAREY

hacked the elastic band off my white Sears & Roebuck panties. Then I offered the band and the knife to Jones like the trophies in some bizarre contest.

The crude slingshot worked. With the added impetus, Jones was able to direct the rock with the chalkline over a low limb of one of the trees above the well. The first few times the rock didn't fall back down the well, and Jones had to pull it back down and start over. But, eventually, he was successful. He tied the one end of the cloth rope to the line and painstakingly hoisted it up over the branch and back to the bottom of the well. The rope was just long enough; a few more feet, and we all might have ended up in nothing but our pants!

An actual smile broke on Jones's face when he held the two ends of the rope. I don't think I'd ever seen Old Sourpuss smile before, and I was starting to think that no one but his dentist had ever seen his teeth. "Now we're in business!" he said jubilantly.

"What about Rico?" I asked.

"I'll be all right," Rico hastily assured us. "I can just sit here until you can get help."

"Yeah, you should be okay," Jones agreed. "Rosemary will be with you. I'll leave you both food and one canteen. Hell, you'll probably be safer down here than I will be on the top."

"He'd be safer on the top, too," I couldn't resist adding. "There's nothing bigger than a chipmunk in these woods. And, besides, I'm going with you."

Jones just threw me a dirty look and began arranging Rico's supplies. "I can travel faster alone," he said shortly. "You stay here with Rico."

"What if something happens to you?" I challenged him. "We'd be stuck in here forever!"

"What's going to happen to me?" he snorted, as if that was the most foolish question he could imagine.

"Oh, I don't know," I tossed back. "You could fall down a well or something . . ."

Rico could see the whole thing heating up again, and he tried to cool us off with the soothing balm of reason. "Dr. Jones, I think Rosemary should go with you. There's no reason for her to stay here with me, and I'd feel a lot better if there were two of you out there going for help. Besides," he added, bringing up a point that hadn't occurred to either one of us, "we don't know how strong that rope or that branch are. Rosemary might be the only one who's light enough climb out of here."

Jones stared at me, at the dangling rope, and then at Rico. "You're right," he finally conceded. "Okay," he told me, "go on."

"Wait a minute!" I said, suddenly a lot less keen on climbing out of there. "What if the rope breaks?"

"Then we'll make a better one," Jones said flatly. "Go on."

In your grandpa's barn we used to shinny up the rope from the hay hook all the way to the ridgepole of the loft. My technique was a little rusty, but I managed to make the climb without any major embarrassments. The tree limb groaned and swayed, and the knotted rope stretched, but both held. As I wriggled out onto the branch, crawling on my belly, Jones shouted, "Unloop the rope and see if you can tie it to the trunk or something else solid."

I pulled up one end of the rope, freed it from the branch, and hopped to the ground.

"Hurry up!" Jones yelled impatiently.

But I had learned something of value in the last ten minutes: underpants without an elastic band do not stay up! "Just a minute!" I shouted back. Then I took advantage of my last moments of privacy to pull off my shorts and relieve myself of the sagging panties. I stuffed them in my pocket. Then I tied the rope to a stout tree and dropped the free end back down the well.

Jones could climb like a monkey, and in a minute his dusty head popped over the edge of the well. His pockets were crammed with his charts and equipment. He looked like Mr. Steinbach, the junkman. Oh--that was before your time. Well, he looked like a real tramp, that's for sure. He peered back over the ragged rim of the pit. "You okay down there, Rico?"

Rico's voice sounded very far away. "I'm fine, Dr. Jones. You and Rosemary go ahead."

Jones gazed around to get his bearings and made a quick consultation with his topography map. "No point in going to the Tark," he said, to no one in particular--certainly not me. "There's got to be a farm or something closer than that."

"This isn't exactly farming country," I noted.

Jones glowered at me, interpreting the remark as a challenge to his idea. Then he checked his compass and, wordlessly, set out through the trees.

It had been blessedly cool down in the well; I had forgotten how muggy the weather was topside. Sweating and swatting bugs, I stumbled after Jones. I was beginning to feel what I had bruised in the fall--it felt like everything. It seemed like we had walked for hours, but I'm sure it was more like a half-hour, when we came to a rusty five-strand barbed wire fence.

"Ah-hah!" Jones said smugly, as if he had just proven the earth were round.

"I'm not sure this is a good idea," I told him.

Jones seemed to expect that. "Why not?" he demanded, plucking at the fence wires. "We must be getting near a farm."

I didn't try to explain that we could easily still be miles from another human being, fence or no fence. "How do we know what's on the other side?" I said instead.

Jones waved his arm. "Trees--just like on this side!"

I wanted to point out that no one builds a five-strand fence just to keep in trees, but Jones had already levered himself through the wires and was striding purposefully away. I slipped through after him and jogged to catch up. The land rapidly became less wooded, what we used to call "poverty pasture." There were lots of tuffets and copses of brush spread out between stretches of low, boggy ground full of sedges and sawgrass. I became absorbed in the scrubby landscape, envisioning how proud of me Abner would be if I discovered a mound. When Jones suddenly halted in front of me, I bumped right into him.

"Oh, Christ!" he exclaimed. "Look at **that**!"

On the grassy flat before us spread a little herd of about twenty red-and-white Ayrshire heifers. And "**that**!" was the biggest Ayrshire bull I had ever seen!. Also the biggest damn' Ayrshire bull that had ever seen **me**--because we had definitely attracted his attention.

"Maybe he hasn't seen us," Jones lied hopefully.

I had about a split second to ruminate over something your grandpa once said--that's there's no more dangerous animal in North America than the pure-bred dairy bull--before Mr. Ayrshire lowered his horns and charged.

Jones dodged to the right, and I dodged to the left, and the bull plowed through a lot of nothing where the both of us had been standing seconds before. We looked frantically around for some means of escape, but there wasn't a decent-sized tree or rock within a hundred yards. Mr. Bull dipped his horns in the sod where we had been standing and then swept his head around like a hound casting for scent. Maybe Jones smelled stronger, or maybe it was just bad luck, because that was the direction the Ayrshire charged.

Don't ask me why I did it; it certainly wasn't bravado--just instinct. I whipped those Sears & Roebuck panties out of my pocket and ran, whooping like a wild Indian, after the bull! The Ayrshire didn't change course, but he did hesitate a moment; and in that moment, Jones darted sideways. The bull pounded past him, catching the back of Jones's leg with the tip of one horn and sending him sprawling.

As I reached Jones, he was staggering to his feet. The back of his trouser leg was ripped open and the fabric stained with blood, but this was no time to play Florence Nightingale. Actually, Buffalo Bill would have been more helpful! I grabbed Jones's arm and shouted, "Come on! Come on! The swamp!"

The bull had swung around and was coming for us again. Usually it's a better idea to try to outmaneuver a bull than to try and outrun one; they **are** pretty nearsighted, but there's nothing wrong with their legs. But sometimes you don't have much of a choice, and this was one of those times. I hauled on Jones's arm--hard--and headed for the nearest bog. As Jones stumbled after me, I heard the bull galloping up behind us. He was so close I could smell the warm, sweet cow-smell of him, just as clearly as I could smell the tang of crushed grass and Jones's perspiration. In one last desperate move, my lungs burning and my legs aching, I turned and flung the torn panties at the bull's face. Then we were splashing headlong into the marsh.

Our momentum carried us across the first mucky stretch of swamp and into the tall cattails. By the time we came to a halt, we both pitched forward face-first into two feet of very putrid water. I think I swallowed six gallons of that slough-juice; I came to the surface gagging and sputtering. Jones struggled to his feet. He took my arm and helped pull me up. We began sloshing hastily across the bog, throwing fetid water up before us in a wild spray. I didn't even look back until we reached the other side of the mire. The bull was at the edge of the swamp, down on his knees. grinding my panties into the sod!

Jones wouldn't stop until we had once again put the five-strand fence between us and that bull. On the other side, we both sprawled on the mossy ground beneath the trees, gasping and coughing. I think I felt as awful as we looked--soaking wet and covered with mud, slime, and bits of decayed vegetation. And I was sure that looking at Jones was like looking in a mirror.

Suddenly I remembered. "Dr. Jones--your leg!"

Jones twisted around, pulling at his torn pants leg. "Ah, it's just a scratch," he maintained with a shrug. "But I think I may have turned my ankle when I fell." He stared at me. "That was some mighty fancy footwork back there, Rosemary. What the hell did you throw at him?"

I blushed and tried to divert his attention from my burning cheeks by picking duckweed off my arm. "My panties," I mumbled.

A hoot of something that sounded suspiciously like laughter erupted from Jones's mouth. He shook his head, gazing at me with what could only have been frank admiration. It mildly stunned me. "How did you know he wouldn't follow us into that bog?"

I started picking the goop out of my hair. "Cows don't like swampy ground. It's the suction; they're afraid their feet'll get stuck or something."

"Well, I'm glad **somebody** knew that," Jones remarked casually. He plucked at one leg of his wet and filthy trousers and gave another snort of laughter.

I looked up at him, dumbfounded by his turn of mood. "What?" I said.

He was actually **grinning**, so help me God! "I was just thinking--I was afraid I'd peed my pants back there and now I can see it hardly matters!"

I choked back a laugh and tried ineffectively to cover the blush that bloomed on my cheeks. Jones reached into one of his pockets and produced a wet, but surprisingly clean, handkerchief and offered it to me. While I wiped at my face, he examined the soggy remains of his charts. The compass was probably at the bottom of the swamp, along with our food and canteen.

"Well, Rosemary," Jones announced cheerfully, tossing the sodden papers over his shoulder, "we are in great shape!"

"I think you had the right idea, Dr. Jones," I said, handing the hanky back to him. "If we follow this fence, we might come to a road or a farm."

Jones dabbed at his face. Then he gazed thoughtfully at me. "Why don't you just call me Indiana?"

I guess I must have been staring dumbly at him.

"It's okay." He winked. "We won't tell Abner."

So Jones was no fool, either! There was another thing I had discovered about him: he had eyes that could smile, even when his mouth wouldn't budge. And even that ratty little mustache didn't look so awful anymore.

Jones hauled himself to his feet and held out his hand to me. "Well, which way do you think?"

I shrugged and pointed to the right. He nodded and started out ahead of me. I didn't have so much trouble keeping up with him anymore, even though I was starting to feel the cumulative effects of everything my body had been subjected to. Jones walked with a slight, skillfully concealed limp, and his pace was no longer so furious. It was mid-afternoon now, and where the sun overhead broke through the trees, the steamy heat was intense. Sweat soaked my shirt and shorts and trickled through my hair. The woodland was like a tropical jungle; if I'd heard a parrot screech or Tarzan yodel, I wouldn't have been surprised.

Just when I was debating suggesting we halt for a rest, Indiana stopped and pointed ahead. "Look at that!" he said enthusiastically.

Luckily, this time "that" was not 3,000 pounds of hamburger on the hoof. We had reached the crest of a long, gentle slope. At the foot of the hill, about a hundred yards away and half-hidden by the trees, was a building. It was a small, single-story house faced with rough, unpainted boards and surrounded by a weedy yard cluttered with rusting machinery and piles of firewood. The body of a derelict truck rested up on blocks, wheel-less, tall maple saplings springing up through its shattered windscreen.

"What a mess!" Indiana pronounced. "You think anyone lives here?"

Once again, my contribution was a shrug. "One way to find out," I suggested. As we trotted down the slope, I felt the stirrings of a modest sense of encouragement. I guess that made me a little careless. When we reached the edge of the neglected yard, a low, dark form rocketed out from beneath the carcass of the truck and hit the end of its chain with a tremendous **twang**! I must have jumped three feet straight up!

Indy grabbed my arm. "Jesus!"

A huge black-and-tan dog danced on the end of its tether, yapping wildly, its foaming jaws snapping not ten feet from us. Suddenly, its furious baying turned into an injured yip, and the dog turned tail and darted back under the truck body. Someone had thrown a rock at him. We turned to see a man emerging from the trees at the edge of the yard.

"Are we glad to see you!" Indy exclaimed, approaching the man with his hand extended. "I'm Dr. Jones with the Ravenwood group over at the Indian mounds. We've had someone get hurt. Do you have a telephone?"

The man stood staring stolidly at us, making no move to accept Indy's hand. He was tall and stoop-shouldered, with three- or four- days growth of beard on his sunburnt face. He wore filthy, faded bib overalls with no shirt, and the curly hair on his shoulders and arms looked like iron filings. I was acutely aware of three things. First of all, Indy and I both looked like hell. Secondly, this man had never heard of Abner Ravenwood or the dig. And, thirdly, he had a very large firearm in his grasp. It wasn't the kind of gun you shot squirrels with, either; it was more your standard blow-a-hole-the-size-of-a-watermelon-in-a-man gun. I put out my hand and touched Indy's back; he didn't turn his head, but at least he knew where I was.

"Whatchu want, boy?" the stubble-faced man demanded, as though Indy hadn't said a word. As he spoke, the barrel of the big gun bobbed.

"I'm a teacher at the university," Indy tried again. No use in being too specific! He kept his hands spread and in plain sight. "We were mapping in the woods near here. One of our boys broke his leg. We need to call help. If we could just use your--"

A thick jet of brown spit shot from the man's mouth, landing at Indy's feet. "University, huh?"

"Listen, if we could just use--"

"What about **her**?" the surly man growled, tilting the gun barrel toward me.

"I'm a student," I explained meekly, peering out from behind Indy. I tried to watch both the gun and the man's eyes; I didn't like the look of either one of them.

The man was leering at me. "**She** can come in and use the telephone," he said. When Indy made a step forward, he found the gun barrel levelled at him. "**Not** you," the man continued. "I don't trust **you**."

Indy glanced at me, then at the man's grizzled and thoroughly unpleasant face. He reached back and took hold of my hand. "No, thanks," he said calmly. "I think we'll just keep walking."

"Ain't another place for three or four miles," the man jeered. The gun bobbed restlessly in his hands, just like it was a living thing that had to be restrained, like the big dog that now cowered under the truck body.

"Which direction?" Indy asked him.

"Hah!" the man snorted. Then he laughed a very unpretty laugh. "A big university feller like yerself ought to be able to figger that out!"

"Thanks," Indy said blandly. He pulled firmly at my hand, and, confused, I stumbled after him. We crossed the weed-choked yard, skirting the piles of junk. Indy did not look back, but I couldn't keep from glancing nervously over my shoulder at the man with the gun. We entered the trees at the far side of the yard. Indy walked rapidly, purposefully, literally dragging me along. We picked up the fenceline again. At last I could no longer see the dilapidated house or the jumbled yard. Indy had not said a word to me. Then, suddenly, he stumbled, pulling free of my hand, and began to limp without any pretense.

"Dr. Jones! Are you all right?"

Indy lowered himself to the ground and looked up me, his mouth drawn in a tight grimace. "I told you to call me Indiana," he got out between his teeth.

I knelt beside him. He tugged at the lacing of his left boot, grunting and muttering under his breath. But when I tried to help him, he pushed my hands away. "Ouch! I can do it!" He wriggled his boot off and gingerly peeled down his wet sock. His left ankle was swollen to twice its normal size. Even through the muck on his skin, I could see the purplish discoloration. I looked on helplessly as he cautiously massaged his foot.

"What was that all about back there?" I finally asked, jerking my chin in the direction we had come.

"He didn't have any phone!" Indy snorted derisively, looking up. "No wires!"

I was confused. Do you believe I was that naive? "But why did he--"

Indy just stared at me, his look plainly saying, Oh, come on, Rosemary!

I stared back, confounded. "You mean--you think he wanted to--"

"Yeah," he said shortly. "And I didn't care much for the looks of that little popgun, either."

I dropped back onto my rump in the grass, wiping my hands ineffectively on my dirty shorts. I looked at Indy's ankle. "Are you going to be able to walk?"

Indy shrugged, deliberately nonchalant. "Slowly," he said ruefully. "And not real far. Let's rest a minute."

Because of the humidity, the muck and slime had never really dried on our clothes. Everything chafed. I found I felt uncomfortably sticky, but I was too stiff and sore and bone-tired to worry about it. How could I have attracted that old lecher's attention? If I looked as bad as I felt, I could hardly appear very desirable!

I slouched against a tree, surreptitiously watching Indy's face as he carefully replaced his sock. "Indiana?" I began.

He didn't bother to look up. "Mmmm?"

"Can I ask you something? Something kind of . . . personal?"

His reply, delivered in a rapid, staccato burst, surprised me. "**Yes**, it's my **real** name! I was **born** there! My mother had a great sense of humor!!"

"Oh." What I had wanted to ask him was if he knew whether or not Abner was seeing anyone seriously! Obviously, he was more accustomed to the question he had answered instead. Suddenly, in a warm little rush of knowledge, I saw Indy for what he really was: a thoroughly dedicated young man who was not at all as sure of himself as he wanted us to believe. Then I began to giggle.

Indy's eyebrows lifted, and he stared at me with bemused confusion. "What's so funny? Ro? What's so damned funny?"

I had begun to choke and sputter, like a stalling aircraft engine. I was shaking so hard trying to suppress my laughter that I thought I'd wet my pants. But it was useless--I burst into raucous laughter, tears springing from my eyes.

Indy was smiling tentatively, bewildered. "Ro? Come on, for Chrissake, **what**?!"

"I bet," I gasped, "you're glad you weren't born in Virginia!!" Then I dissolved into helpless hooting again.

But Indy just smiled mildly, nodding. He'd obviously heard **that** before, too. "Or Georgia," he replied calmly. "Yeah, I know." He fumbled with his boot, while I sniffled and snorted and tried to regain my breath. He got the boot jammed on over his swollen ankle, but couldn't lace it. Awkwardly, he pulled himself to his feet.

I stood up, eyeing him anxiously. "Are you sure you can walk?"

"Yeah. Just get me a branch I can use as a cane, huh? I can walk."

Indy could walk--after a fashion. But I had to take the lead; I couldn't stand to watch the way he was pushing himself. The land was less hilly now, but long, shallow slopes, fraught with brush and tree roots and rocks, were a continuous challenge. I tried to decide what part of my body ached the most. We had only traveled a half-hour or so before I stopped, complaining that my feet hurt, and that I wanted to rest again. I guess Indy probably realized that it was really his ankle that was hurting me, but he didn't protest, and he sank down and sat with me without comment.

The sun was sliding lower in the sky. I began to think about Rico sitting alone in the bottom of that well--even though he was probably more comfortable than we were. Some rescue! We were about to the point where we needed someone to rescue **us**!

When I got to my feet again, I suggested, "Why don't you stay here, Indy? Let me go on ahead."

Indy shook his head. "No way. We're going together."

"But it's getting late," I reminded him. God, I hated to say this! "And I can travel faster without you."

Obstinately, Indy again shook his head.

"But you can hardly walk! Let me go on ahead. I can bring back help."

How stubborn that man could be! How fiercely he could set that jaw! He reached out and grabbed my arm. "I'm responsible for you, Ro, and for Rico, too," he said. And that was that.

I was finally able to convince him to at least sit a little longer while I hiked ahead to scout the most promising route. I half-considered just keeping on going, but I couldn't bring myself to just abandon him. Besides, he would have killed himself trying to catch up with me--and he would have killed **me** when he did! I followed the fenceline, plodding resolutely up yet another slope. At the top of the hill I paused. My heart rose. Below me I saw the most beautiful sight.

At the bottom of the hill, a second fence intersected ours at a right angle. Beyond that fence, the land was suddenly flat, and the trees broke, revealing a vast stretch of pastureland. And in that pasture stood two big, gorgeous mules!

I raced back to where I'd left Indy, shouting, "Indy! Guess what?!"

Indy pulled himself up on his cane, eyeing me with a little alarm. "What now?"

I pranced around him, giddy with excitement. "I've got it! Our way out of here!"

His eyes narrowed. "Unless it's a '24 De Soto, don't count on it." He tapped his leg with the branch. "A bicycle just isn't going to make it."

"Come on! Come on!" I tugged at his sleeve, nearly dragging him up the hill. At the top, he stared at the pasture, then at me. "Horses?!" he said incredulously.

"They aren't horses--they're **mules**!" I explained. "We can ride out of here, Indy! You don't have to walk!"

He just continued to stare at me. "I hope you know what you're doing, Ro," was all he said.

We crawled through the fence and crossed the first section of the pasture. By this time we had attracted the attention of the mules, and they began to move off slowly ahead of us, keeping a casual eye on our progress. They were big farm mules, fifteen- or sixteen-hands high, not the lanky little mules that used to pull the coal carts at home. You wouldn't remember that, of course. And not only did these mules mean transportation to us, they also meant that someone lived nearby. No one puts mules out on pasture all summer like heifers. Somewhere, within a reasonable distance, lived whoever owned these mules--and the mules would know how to take us there.

"How're we going to catch them?" Indy asked, just curiously and not like he doubted it could be done. I felt absurdly grateful for his confidence.

"That's not the hard part," I said. "I was wondering what we could use for a bridle." I stared down at the muddy front of my blouse, then looked up at Indy. "Do you still have your knife?"

"Wait a minute--we'll use **my** shirt. You've already donated enough of your clothes to the cause." He removed his grubby khaki shirt and began to cut it into narrow strips. I tied them into a long rope. What? No, he didn't exactly look "sexy" with his shirt off. He looked the same way he had with his shirt on: dirty and wet and slimy!

As Indy watched in fascination, I collected eight or ten small, round pebbles from the ground. I carefully coiled up our rope and tucked it under my shirt. Then I began to casually amble across the pasture. I moved parallel to the pair of mules, not looking directly at them. I began to roll the pebbles briskly in my hands; they made a clicking, chirping sound. In a surprisingly short time, one of the mules turned toward me, his huge ears pointed forward. Then, suspicious but irresistibly drawn, he began to approach me.

I didn't hold out my hands; that would have given away the ruse. I let him come right up to me. His whiskery lips bumped my palms, seeking whatever treat he had been fooled into thinking I carried. I jumped up and grabbed him tightly by the base of one leathery ear. He froze. In seconds, I had jerked my rope out and was wrapping it over his head in a crude sort of halter. Then I waved to Indy. He hobbled toward me, grinning broadly.

"How the hell'd you do that?" he demanded, pleased and impressed.

"Aw, it was easy," I replied, almost embarrassed by his pleasure. "Mules aren't dumb, but they're hopelessly curious." I gestured toward the second mule. "Now all we've got to do is catch that one."

Puzzled, but totally absorbed, Indy watched as I led the first mule across the pasture toward the other one. By using my mule as a cover I was able to approach his partner with relative impunity. At the last moment, the other mule smelled a rat and started to wheel away; but I made a flying tackle and hung onto his ear like a pit bull. I hastily fastened the free end of the khaki rope around the older mule's head. Then I freed the first mule.

"Hey!" Indy called as the young mule scampered away. He limped over to me, waving his cane at the freed mule. "Why'd you let him go?" He was staring critically at the mule I held. It was sway-backed, and its neck and withers were peppered with white harness galls; it had long, grey whiskers, like an ancient cat. "This one looks like he wouldn't last two minutes!" So much for his confidence in me!

"The other one is just a colt," I explained patiently, knotting the rope around the mule's head. "He was the easiest to catch because he's too young to be real suspicious. But he probably isn't even broke. This old guy may not look like much," I continued, patting the dusty, brown shoulder, "but I think he'll be a lot more reliable."

Indy was grinning again. "Jesus--you are amazing! Where do you **learn** all of this stuff?" He reached out to clap me on the back, but he caught me off-balance, and I stumbled into him, turning the back-clap into a clumsy hug.

Unaccountably embarrassed, I pulled back. "Do you know how to ride?"

He hesitated, but apparently he could see no advantage in trying to deceive me. "Not really," he confessed.

"That's okay," I told him. "For this you don't exactly have to be Tom Mix." I knotted the reins over the mule's withers. "Can you get up on him?" I was thinking in terms of his ankle, not his skill as an equestrian.

"Sure," he said, tossing his cane aside. And to my surprise, he sprang quite easily aboard the mule. Then he held out his hand to me, and I scrambled up in front of him. I gathered the khaki reins and pressed my heels against the old mule's sides. The mule ambled forward.

"I think if we give him his head he'll go for home," I explained. At least, I hoped so! I had never known a mule who preferred getting hopelessly lost to getting back to his own stall. The younger mule frolicked along behind us, pretending to be suitably alarmed by the two-headed apparition that now possessed his buddy.

"Won't he go faster?" Indy asked.

"You won't like it," I warned him, squeezing the mule's girth. The mule broke into a jarring trot; it was like four pile drivers attacking cement. We bounced wildly and not necessarily in rhythm.

Indy grabbed hold of my waist. "Okay, okay," he conceded, and I pulled the mule back down to a walk again, which is a mule's only civilized gait. "Not recommended for sprained ankles!" he admitted, releasing me.

As we rode along, for the first time all day the weather seemed almost pleasant. The sun was lower in the sky, tempering the heat, and a mild breeze blew across the pasture. The big mule trundled placidly along, his body rolling from side to side, his long head bobbing. He nipped at grass seedheads and swished his coarse tail in rhythm with his step. We followed a narrow dirt track, beaten by the mules' hooves, that wound along beneath huge oak trees. Cicadas throbbed, birds sang. The pressure of Indy's body where it touched mine was a pleasurable and reassuring feeling: his long thighs against my legs, the occasional bump of his hips or chest on my back. He laughed with amusement at the antics of the young mule that followed us. It was one of those rare, small moments when all the perplexing threads of things seem to come together, and there is, at least for the moment, a harmonious tapestry to life.

What's that? No--is that all you think about?! It wasn't like that at all. Maybe two or three years later I would have thought about those things, but not then. I just felt a good sense of--oh, what's the word?--camaraderie, that's it. I felt a great sense of camaraderie with Indiana Jones.

"What's that?" Indy suddenly asked. I had been daydreaming. He pointed ahead to a definite gap in the trees. "Is that a road?"

I urged the mule into a faster walk. Indy's head peered over my shoulder. I reined the mule off the trail until we were close enough to see the open area. It was not a road, but railroad tracks, a single set of rails paralleling the mule track. And along the tracks were telephone poles and wires! "Now we're getting somewhere!" Indy exclaimed happily.

"Wait a minute," I said, pulling in the mule.

"What?"

"Listen."

Puzzled, Indy looked around us. "I don't hear any--"

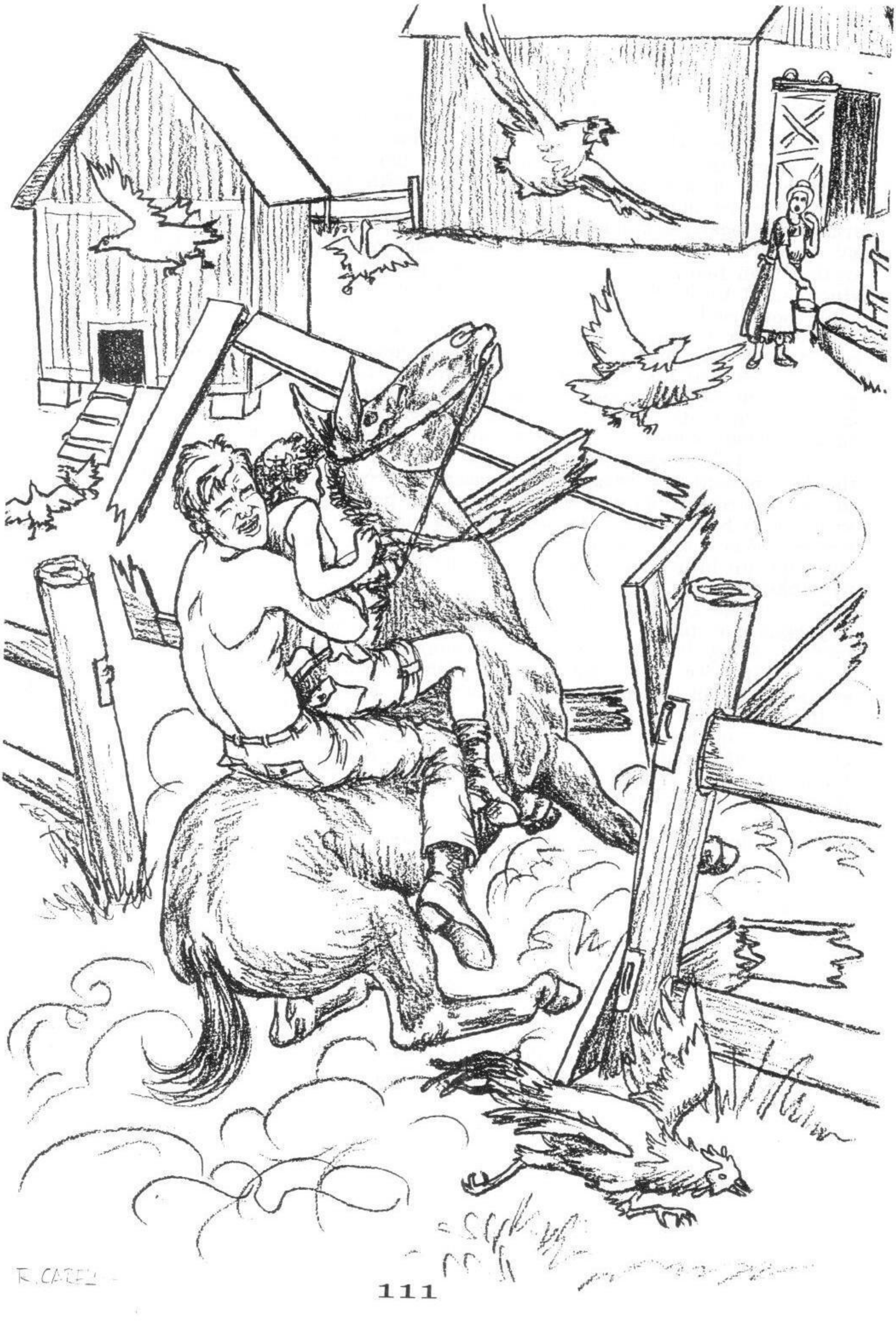
And then he did. Phutt-phutt-phutt! A distant pocketing noise, rapidly increasing in volume, was approaching from behind us. Suddenly white smoke in popping puffs was visible above the tops of the trees. The rails began to vibrate and rattle against the ties. The mule's big ears swivelled and locked onto the sound.

"God's teeth!" Indy blurted. "That sounds like a steam engine!"

The mule began to sidestep; when I tried to hold him in, he began to turn in a circle, his long ears flattened against his neck. Indy's hands clutched my waist. The sound of the approaching train became deafening. "Are mules afraid of--" Indy shouted in my ear. Then the red-and-gold steam engine burst from behind the tree line, and his question became purely rhetorical.

For someone who couldn't ride, Indy sure could sit a mule. Our trusty mount got one look at the fire-belching monster and swapped directions one-hundred-eighty degrees in midair! To reassure us that he meant no harm, the train's engineer gave a few ear-splitting blasts on his whistle. By that time our mule's feet weren't even touching the ground anymore.

I had two surprisingly coherent thoughts in those first few seconds. The first was that even a panicky mule might head home if I gave him free rein.


R. CAREY

And the second was that there was no way in hell I was going to hold that mule in, even if I wanted to! I forgot about the reins and dug my fingers into his bristly mane just about the time we hit the trees.

Thanks to my shorts and my cotton blouse, I was once again taking a beating. Branches and weeds whipped at my bare arms and legs, nearly tearing me from the mule's back. My eyes swam with tears from the leaves and the wind. I sure hoped the damn' mule could see better than I could! Indy's arms were locked around me in a desperate embrace; I think his confidence in my stability was misplaced. And yet--and yet I felt more a sense of exhilaration than fear, as if all we had been through this day made us somehow invincible. I think if I could have gotten my breath, I would have laughed out loud, not cried.

Just when I was sure the next branch was going to tear us both off the mule's back, we broke through the trees again and back onto the dirt pathway. I grabbed for the reins again, hoping to pull the mule in. But the old guy had the scent of home in his nostrils, and nothing would deter him, least of all my pathetic efforts with my makeshift bridle. Only one obstacle remained ahead of him: a three-rail wooden gate that closed the end of the lane.

"Oh, shit!" I remember thinking; maybe I even said it out loud. And at the last moment the same thing seemed to occur to the mule as had occurred to me: there was no way on earth he was going to clear that gate, especially with us on him. The mule dropped his rump and began to slide. We hit the wooden poles at a still-dizzying speed, the gate snapping like firecrackers. Dirt flew up in a wave from beneath the mule's hooves. Then the air exploded with chickens.

By the time the mule stopped sliding, the sky looked like someone had staged a gargantuan pillow fight. Screeching chickens landed all around us; one banked off my head. A woman in a sunbonnet and a long dress stood holding a pail not fifty feet from where we had ultimately ground to a halt. She stared at us in astonishment. "Jehovah!" she exclaimed, dropping the pail.

Indy slid off the trembling mule, landed on his bad ankle, and crumpled face-first in the dirt like a Saturday night drunk. A temporarily stunned chicken detonated from under his nose. Rising to his knees, he crawled toward the farm woman, announcing, "Dr. Jones--University of Chicago, ma'am. Have you a telephone?"

Ironically, as such things go, the farm was less than a mile from the Tarkington site. Our wayward journey had taken us close to the mark after all. When we were reunited with Abner at the dig, his only comment was a relieved, "This is why I always insist on having an experienced person along on a trace."

To which Indy replied, "Yeah, I'm sure glad Rosemary was there!"

Rico was in the hospital for a couple of weeks, but he wrote to tell us that he would be able to start his fall classes at the UW on crutches. Indy's ankle was badly sprained, but he was back at the university by the start of the fall semester. I saw him one afternoon that first week of classes crossing the mall in front of the Natural Sciences building. He was limping, but not much. "Hey, Ro!" he called out, waving at me.

He looked good; in fact, he was never to look bad to me again. He was even growing a beard! We chatted a few minutes. Then he pressed something into my hand.

It was a small notebook with a scrap of paper tucked into the pages.

"What's this?" I asked him.

His eyes were smiling, and damned if his mouth didn't just sort of slide along! "It's Abner's home phone number," he said with a conspiratorial wink, "and the logbook he **thinks** he lost at the Tark. Good luck, Ro!"

Well, I guess you know that I never did catch Abner Ravenwood--although that logbook was good for an unforgettable dinner at the Blue Door on State Street. I did run into Rico again, years later, when I was working for Dr. Lohman in Milwaukee. We began to see other, quite seriously. What? Oh, if I told you his full name, you'd realize who he was: Frederick Marsh, the man I almost married. But Rico was a dreamer, and he had an itchy foot. He joined the Merchant Marine; his ship went down somewhere in the Pacific before the war.

And did I ever run into Indiana Jones again? Well, now, that would be another story . . .

Dr. Jones . . .

your chickens
are here . . .

The Last Time We Talked

by

Karen Estabrook

"Sit down, boy, sit down," Henry Jones instructed his son as they reached the counter. He spun the stool slightly and sat, carefully placing the suitcase next to his feet. He allowed himself a glance at the tall boy whose gangly limbs seemed like toothpicks in the suit's sleeves and trouser legs.

"Dad, I don't think there's time--" Indiana Jones's voice was nearly a whisper. He looked nervously over his shoulder and out the door, wishing he hadn't come in. The morning had lasted forever; he saw no reason to prolong it. With his free hand he again tried to loosen the bow tie which pinched his neck, making him even more uncomfortable in the late summer heat. Once on the train, he decided, that tie would disappear deeply into his pocket. But now he suddenly caught his father's disapproving stare, and his hand dropped.

"Junior, stop fussing and sit down. You've a good twenty minutes before the train arrives." Henry snapped open his watch and checked. "Make that eighteen minutes. Too late for lunch. Let's have something cold to drink."

Indy scowled as he began to coil the leash, pulling his big, aging malamute closer. The dog gagged slightly, unaccustomed to being tied. Indy reached out his hand to gently stroke the dog's fur, caressing it with a lingering touch, to remember its feel. He half-heard his father giving an order to the counterman. Indy was lost to the moment, all the apprehension and sadness of leaving his dog, his home, the familiar for college again enveloping him. But he was yanked back to the present as his father tugged him down onto a stool.

"For King Arthur's sake, boy, do wake up. You're in a trance."

Indy shrugged, shaking his head as if to clear it of its tribulations. His dog lay down at his feet. "Sorry--sir."

"No need to apologize," Henry replied. "This is a big day for you. You're embarking on a quest for the future, a search for knowledge which will never truly end. I remember my big day . . . Ah, well, it has a tendency to daze even the most awesome minds."

"Yes, sir."

"Now remember, I want you to send a telegram the minute you arrive. Marcus--don't forget he'll be meeting you at the station--Marcus will take you to the telegraph office--"

"I know all this, Dad," Indy interrupted, trying to keep the annoyance from his tone. "We've gone over it a million times. Besides, I'm sure I can find a telegraph office on my own. I **can** read, you know. Trust me."

Henry stared at his son, the corners of his mouth drawing down as he heard the sarcasm in the voice. "I merely wanted to be sure. It never hurts to be sure."

Indy rolled his eyes. "**You're** the one who always writes everything down. You have a mind like a sieve."

To the boy's surprise, Henry chuckled. "That's true, somewhat. It's going to be difficult getting used to remembering things for myself now. I'll miss you, boy."

Indy barely managed to hold back a snort. **Yeah, you'll miss having every-**

thing around the place done, he thought, looking accusingly at his father. **You'll miss having a caretaker while you shut yourself away with that damn diary.** He glanced up and waited as two tall glasses filled with frothy milkshakes were set before them. And then to his father he said, "You'll have to hire a maid."

"I may do that," Henry replied, regarding his drink with appreciation, "When I move back east shortly."

"What?" Indy turned quickly to his father. "What are you talking about?"

The man looked at the boy. "Well, what is there for me here? You won't go to school in Utah, **have** to leave. So if I come back east, I'll be nearer my places of research. I have several friends there, and it would be interesting to have a change of students."

"You'd still be a professor?" Indy asked doubtfully, having heard from college students just how unloved his father's teaching was. It didn't surprise him. The man had never been able to communicate with his own son.

"Of course!" Henry responded. "Research doesn't pay very well--in case you hadn't noticed. No, since you insist on going east, there's nothing left for me here."

"Nah," Indy answered bitterly. "Just our house--and--Mom."

"She no longer needs me," was the quiet response.

This time Indy did snort, almost spraying the counter with a mouthful of milkshake. He wanted to scream at his father in disbelief, plying him with blame and proofs of how the husband had never been home or alert when Mary needed him. But no. Not today. There were lots of people in the drugstore, and he wasn't about to cause a scene. There'd be another time, another place. He remained silent.

"Besides," Henry continued, as usual failing to notice his son's reaction, "she'd be in favor of it. And I'll tell you another thing . . ." He faced his son, pausing in surprise as it suddenly occurred to him how much to boy resembled Mary and how much he had grown. For the first time, he was aware of how well the old chin scar had faded, and he realized the gangly form housed a set of muscles which would develop well as the growth toward manhood continued. Something else, too. Henry Jones, Jr. had an air of, confidence, capability, and courage which his father had taken for granted for quite some time. And now that the boy was leaving, Henry Sr. was just discovering his boy was nearly a man, full of potential. "I'll tell you another thing," he repeated slowly, "your mother would be very proud of you."

Indy's eyes remained locked with his father's briefly. He wanted to believe that, wanted to reveal to his father his inner wish that somehow Mary was watching. But no--not with this man who'd practically ignored her for Indy's first few years and who'd not even come home while she was sick. No. Instead, he said, "You'll bring Indiana with you if you move, won't you?"

The man's jaw stiffened as he saw disdain in the boy's eyes. "Yes," he replied curtly. Then, as he noticed something else, he ordered, "Take off your hat. We're indoors."

Automatically, Indy removed the worn fedora and set it on the counter beside him. He took a long sip of his milkshake, letting its coolness soothe his tight throat while welcoming the chance to bury his anger. He noticed his father drinking, too, and after both had swallowed, he tried conversation again. "It'll be good to see Marcus again."

Henry nodded. "Yes. I enjoyed his last visit--when was it?--in May." He wiped his mouth with a napkin. "He'll be able to help you get into the right history program."

Indy's fist slammed the counter. "Not history. I told you I'm taking archaeology."

Henry snickered smugly. "There's no future in it, my boy, no job prospects or money. Become an historical scholar and professor and the world will open its many doors. But archaeology--it's nothing but grave-robbing."

"It's what I'm interested in."

"Fine. Take some courses in it, but stay with history as your major."

"Why can't I turn that around? Just because you want it your way?"

"You find a few things in caves while you're off with the--Boy Scouts"--Henry scowled--"and think you've found your life's work. Junior, I'm merely advising from experience. You'd be silly to waste time in such classes."

"The only way I'd be wasting time is to do what you'd like," Indy returned steadily, his eyes blazing into his father's. "**You** like studying fairy tales, sir. **I** like proving whether they're real or make believe. And that's what I intend to do. I don't plan to sit behind a desk everyday for the rest of my life."

"That's all very well and good," his father said flatly. "But you're making a mistake."

"Time will tell," the son answered, his unyielding gaze daring his father to object.

"Yes." Henry sighed with resignation. "Time **will** tell." He held his son's eyes a bit longer, wondering where time had gone, whether the days since he'd first looked at his helpless baby cradled in Mary's arms till the present when he now looked at the defiant, independent young man beside him, had really been years or just minutes. **Oh, well,** he thought, **too late to change him now.** He looked at his watch again then slipped it back into his pocket. "Drink up, Junior. That train's always on time."

Indy finished his milkshake, not bothering to taste it. He reached down, petting Indiana intensely. They'd shared so many adventures, shared a friendship and bond most boys might have had with their fathers. But those days were over.

Outside a train's whistle sounded. Indy cupped the back of the dog's head and smiled into its sad, searching eyes. "I'll miss you, buddy," he breathed as the dog wagged its tail.

"Junior--"

"Yes, I know." Indy stood, grabbing his fedora. He placed his hand on Henry's shoulder, stopping his father from rising. "I'm saying good-bye here, sir. You take Indiana and go on home." He noticed in surprise that Henry seemed disappointed. Indy handed him the leash then extended his hand. "You want me to pay for--"

"No--no, boy. I'll pay for them. Maybe next time we'll talk over a fancy dinner in Connecticut."

"Yeah, maybe."

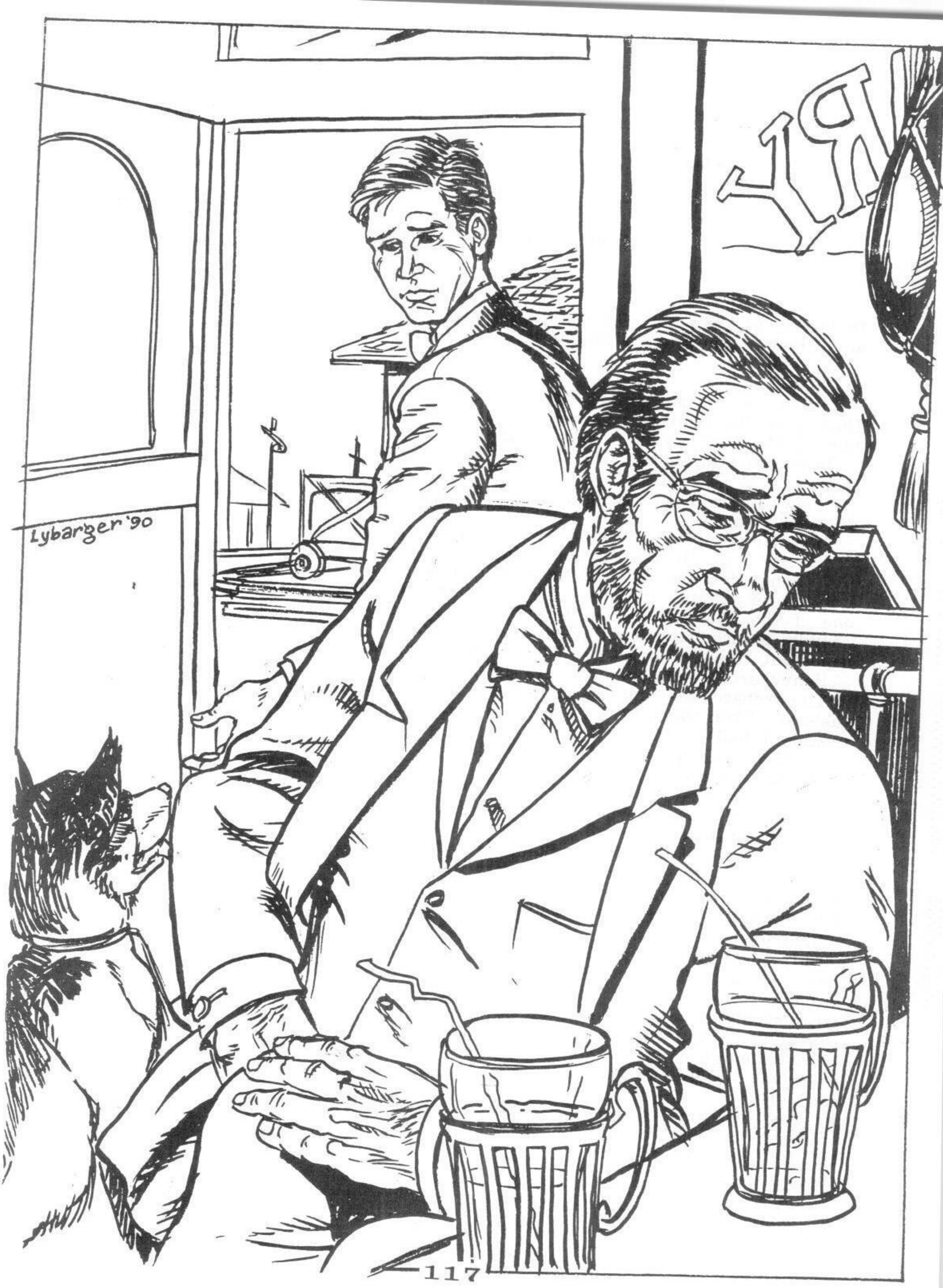
Henry slowly grasped his son's hand. "Junior--take care of yourself."

"You, too, Dad. And of Indiana."

"I'll do my best." He felt the boy's hand fall away--as eighteen years of his life had just done. He swallowed hard. "Give my best to Marcus."

"I will."

Indy grabbed his suitcase with his free hand, turning away but hesitating, wanting desperately to hear his father say something--he didn't even know the words he wanted said. He only knew they weren't uttered. He glanced back at his father, but found Henry had resumed his seat and was looking down, his back to his son as he fumbled in his coat pockets. Indy shook his head at the all-too-familiar sight. He winked quickly at his still-watching malamute, then headed for the train, readily venturing further from his father.


RPL
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Gladly the Cross I'd Bear

by

Samia R. Martz

Dedicated to Ardis the Glenn and the Gang of Four--Fred and Carolyn, Larissa and Chris. They've all taught me a lot--and not just about books!

Indiana Jones sat behind the desk in his study, impatiently drumming his fingers on the blotter and chewing his lower lip as he listened to the buzzing hum of the long-distance phone line.

"Are you still there, sir?" came the nasal inquiry of the Manhattan operator.

"Yes," he said in a dangerously exasperated voice, "I'm still here. Where did you think I'd go?"

"I'm sorry, sir. I should have your party in a moment."

"Swell." He thought of something else to say, but figured that might get his phone disconnected and decided against it.

"Just be patient, Indiana," his father advised him as he removed a book from one of the shelves. "You haven't been waiting that long."

Indy covered the mouthpiece with his hand. "Look, Dad, you know how important this is--to Marcus, to the museum, and most of all to me."

Henry arched an eyebrow.

The archaeologist sighed, familiar with the look, but defended himself nonetheless. "You think I'll let those bastards get their hands on this after all the trouble I had-- Hello?"

"I have your party now, sir."

"Great. Right before hell froze."

"What was that, sir?"

"Just connect me, will you?"

Henry thumbed through the book he was holding, listening to his son's telephone conversation in the background. He supposed he was fortunate to have been fixated on only one Holy Grail; Indiana seemed to find a new object of desire every six months or so. Well, this wasn't exactly new, but rather something Indy had been involved with since he was a youngster.

Henry sat down in an overstuffed chair near the open window of the cluttered study. The boy hadn't done such a bad job with the house here in Barnett, he reflected, taking pleasure in the warm sunlight pouring in from outside. God knew, it was good not to have to find fault with him anymore, good simply to enjoy his presence as he hadn't for longer than he cared to remember. A great deal had changed since last spring in the Republic of Hatay--though perhaps "change" could not adequately describe the illuminating upheaval of his life that adventure had caused. It was an upheaval he was more than grateful for, something truly miraculous, the resurrection of the love he and his son felt for one another. Elizabeth would be very happy, he thought, to know about this, that he could now take a few free days before the fall semester to visit Junior--he still had a little trouble with "Indiana," though he'd tried to overcome it--and he wanted--

"Dammit!" Indy exploded into the telephone. "You said you'd have it for me today!"

"Calm down, boy," Henry remonstrated gently.

Indy was in no mood to calm down, but he tried to get a grip on his rapidly rising temper. "Look, Trautmann, you were supposed to get me that information today and--"

"Dr. Jones"--a smooth, polite voice, pouring oil on troubled waters--"I only said I would try. But I will definitely have what you want by Tuesday."

"That's not good enough."

"It's the best I can do."

"I don't have a very good opinion of your best right now, **Herr** Trautmann."

"Come, Dr. Jones, be reasonable."

He didn't much feel like it, but he made an effort. If this was as important as he'd told his father, he could put up with a few inconveniences. He guessed. "Okay. I'm reasonable, reasonable as hell." He made himself take a deep breath. "So how are you going to get the message to me this time? And, please--no theatrics."

"I do not think we should converse by telephone again, nor do I trust the mails. I will put what you want in an old book, glued between two pages."

"And how do I get this book?"

"You have a rare bookdealer in Barnett, do you not?"

"Yeah," Indy said dubiously.

"You are to go to him--"

"Her."

"--her and express an interest in Carlyle's **On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History**."

"Why not all seven volumes of Gibbon?"

"Because I do not have the Gibbon."

"Oh, yeah, sure, makes sense."

"Dr. Jones . . ."

"I thought I said no theatrics?"

"If you don't want the information--"

"I want it, I want it. I'm paying enough for it. Go on."

"In a few days, I will contact the woman offering to sell her the book. She will want it, of course, since she has an interested client. I will sell it to her, she will sell it to you. Satisfactory, **nicht wahr**?"

"Complicated, **nicht wahr**? Why go to so much--"

"I am trying to keep us all out of trouble, Dr. Jones. You can hardly enjoy the Cross of Coronado if you are dead."

Valid point, Indy thought with a resigned sigh. "All right, Trautmann. I don't like it, but I guess it'll have to do."

And the one thing he liked even less was that he was going to have to deal with Miss Alexandra Brady and the Micawber Bookshop, something that he would wish on no man, young or old.

"Shit," he said succinctly as he hung up. And this was followed by some even more profound and heartfelt observations.

"Oh, really . . ." his father said in mild reproof. "Where did you ever learn language like that, a well-brought-up boy like you?"

"I think I heard it from you the day the dog knocked over the table with your lecture notes on it."

That was entirely possible, Henry conceded. He'd always had a fondness for certain old Anglo-Saxon expressions. "Did this Trautmann have the information you wanted?"

"He's going to get it for me." Indy stood up suddenly, slamming his hand down on the desktop. "Dammit, Dad, I can't believe the Nazis actually got their hands on it! I thought it was so safe in the museum."

"Nothing is safe from them anywhere."

"I guess we should know that if anyone does. But just because Goering wants another bauble for his private collection--"

"Goering doesn't have it yet," Henry pointed out.

"And he's not going to get it, either, not if I can stop them in time."

"Will you--ah--will you be needing any help?"

A sudden, wicked grin split Indiana's features. "Sure, Dad. I'll even let you work your charms on Miss Brady."

"Alex!"

Alexandra Brady turned from the shelves at her assistant's call. "Yes, Laura?"

"Telephone for you."

Alex started down the library ladder from her precarious position on the next-to-the-top step, thrusting a pencil behind her ear. Anyone who thought bookdealing was easy should try climbing up and down this damn' ladder all day, carrying books, inventorying, cataloging, sorting--oh, hell!--running your new stockings-- "Who is it?" she asked as she made her way across the main floor of the shop.

There was a definite devilish gleam in the blond young woman's eyes as she covered the mouthpiece. "Indiana Jones."

Alex's lips formed a word that was not supposed to be in the vocabulary of a respectable woman even in that enlightened day and age. "What does **he** want?"

"He wouldn't say. He just wants to talk to you."

"Well, that certainly makes my day." Perching on the edge of Laura's desk, Alex took the phone from her. "Hello, Dr. Jones," she said in a chilly, polite voice. "How can I help you?"

It's a good thing it's summer, Laura thought, or I'd have to turn up the heat!

"Some Carlyle?" Alex was saying. "Yes, I'm certain I can get that for you. **On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History**?" She motioned for Laura to write it down. "No, I don't have that in at the moment, but I'll see what I can do. I **do** have a nice **French Revolution** if you're interested in-- All right, just the one you mentioned. I'll be in touch. Arrogant bastard!" she added as she slammed the phone down. (Though she had no way of knowing it, Indiana Jones had just done the same thing, pronouncing, "Cold-hearted bitch!")

Laura leaned back in her chair and stared up at her employer. "What has he ever done to make you dislike him so much?"

Alex cocked an eyebrow. "D'you want it alphabetically or chronologically?"

"But he's never even been in the shop since I've been here."

"I had some dealings with him early last spring. And I've seen him around town often enough with that 'Trust me, I'm wonderful' look on his face. It's just his whole damned attitude."

"I don't think he's the only one with an attitude."

"And you intimating I might be less than fair?"

"Yes," Laura said frankly. "I've got a friend in one of his classes--"

"Female Sexuality 101?"

Laura sighed. "One of the advanced archaeology classes. She says he's an excellent teacher."

"I'm sure he'd agree."

"He's very popular."

"Huh. I've seen those giggling coeds following him around town. I wonder what he'd do with a date he could take out to dinner instead for a soda."

"Alex, he doesn't date his students, no matter how much they might want him to."

"I'll just bet not!"

Laura studied her for a moment. "Are you so mad at him because he propositioned you or because he didn't?"

"He did, no fear. Right upstairs in my office."

"What did you do?"

"I smiled at him as sweetly as I could and poured a pitcher of ice water down the front of his pants."

Laura gasped, caught between shock and delight. "Alex, you didn't!"

"Oh, yes, I did. Some men can't take a hint."

"I'm surprised he called, then."

"So'm I." Alex swung one leg, absently tapping her pencil on the desk. "I wonder what's going on . . ."

"Well, I guess we'll find out." She shook her head. "He really doesn't seem the type for Carlyle, though."

"No, I figured him more for Margaret Mead."

"Maybe he's trying to broaden his horizons."

"I've a pretty fair notion of how he'd go about doing **that**."

"Oh, Alex . . ."

"I know. I'm hopeless."

Indiana Jones strolled casually down Barnett's main street, hands thrust deep into his pockets, enjoying the day. He was wearing a light summer suit, and the morning had not yet gotten hot enough to make it wilt or rumple. But that, he knew, was purely a matter of time in August. His father, as usual, looked like he'd just stepped out of a classroom; Indy half-expected to find chalk-dust on the back of--

"Indiana?"

He looked up. "Yeah, Dad?"

"There's young woman across the street trying to get your attention."

Indiana groaned inwardly. Oh, God, not some coed back in town early for some private tutoring--in biology. He ought to send her over to Paul in Natural Sciences; everyone said he was such a hot lover, a real fireball. But he took a quick glance in the direction his father had indicated. An attractive blond--too old for a student--was waving at him from across the street. That wouldn't have been so bad--except she was standing right in front of the Micawber Bookshop. But that might mean the Carlyle . . .

"Dr. Jones!" she called. "I was just getting ready to telephone you, but now Alex can tell you herself--if you'll come in."

"Uh--yeah. Sure."

"Just remember the cross, boy. Keep your mind on that."

"Oh, Dad, it is not going to be easy."

Meanwhile, in the bookshop, Alex wasn't any happier about it. "Laura," she muttered as she came down the stairs from her office, "if I didn't need an assistant of your caliber, I swear I'd push you in front of a bus!"

Then she put on her best professional smile as she crossed the floor to greet the two men at the door.

Henry Jones, Sr. was nonplussed--or as close to that as he ever came.

He'd been expecting some truly formidable harridan in Alex Brady, someone redolent of a bookdealer he'd met once in England and privately termed the "bitch of Bath." But here was a rather attractive woman in her mid-thirties, not in the least intimidating. Her auburn hair was caught at the nape of her neck in a loose knot, and she wore a dark skirt and a white blouse with an antique brooch at the collar. Henry would have described her figure as a trifle Rubenesque; he doubted if Indiana would have been so charitable.

"Jones," he said. "Henry Jones."

"How do you do?" She took his extended hand in a firm grasp.

"Very well, thank you, Miss Brady," he responded with a smile. He couldn't possibly see what his son objected to in this woman. "And--"

Indy stepped in quickly. If his old man wanted to flirt, he could do it on his own time. "Have you found the book yet?"

And the smile froze in place, disappearing from the appraising brown eyes. "I have a line on it, yes. If you'll come up to my office, we can discuss it."

"Nice legs," Henry commented softly as they followed Alex up the stairs. He could appreciate a well-turned ankle as much as the next man.

Indy only grunted, unimpressed. "Don't get carried away, Dad. I told you, she's the most cold-hearted, stuck-up female I ever met."

The same description, Henry noted, that his son applied to any woman who didn't immediately succumb to his rather dubious charms. He was starting to understand the problem.

Alex ushered them across the cluttered office to a pair of chairs in front of a large, old-fashioned desk. The place was more than a bit of a mess, but neither Henry nor Indy were in any position to judge anyone else's working space.

Just pretend they're like any other customers, Alex told herself sternly. After all, there's money in it--something which cheered her up a little. "I think Laura just made coffee. Would you like some?"

"We don't have time," Indy said stonily. Having already experienced Miss Brady and the ice water, he was in no mood to have scalding hot coffee poured in his lap.

"Oh, we're not **that** rushed," Henry murmured.

"Yes, we **are**, Dad." The words came out from between his teeth.

The elder Jones calmly leaned back in his chair and crossed his legs. "I would like some coffee."

His son acquiesced reluctantly, knowing the mood. "All right, all right."

"Now that **that's** settled," Alex asked them, "how do you take it?"

"Black," Indy said shortly.

"Milk and sugar," Henry said, making an effort to sound cordial.

"Fine." Alex shook her head. "I'll be back in a minute."

And she disappeared down the stairs.

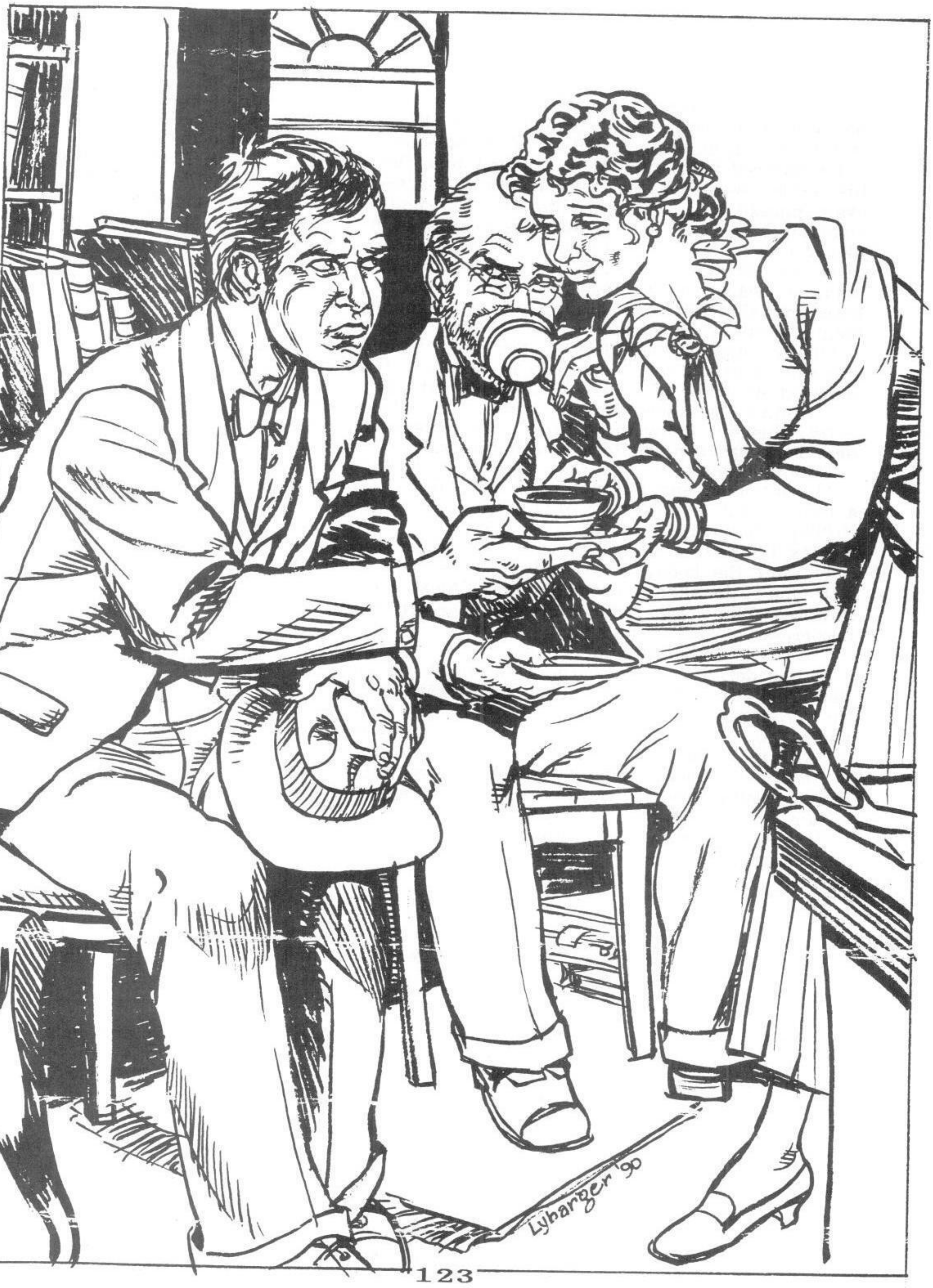
Henry gave his son a disapproving look. "You could at least be civil, Junior."

"I don't like the woman, Dad," he said irritably, not caring for the rebuke and not seeing any reason to be even remotely civil. "I don't like having to do business with her."

"Well, you don't have to be so damned obvious about it, do you?"

Indy only folded his arms and glared off into a corner. Henry resisted the temptation to thump him on the back of the head, reminding himself that the boy wasn't ten anymore--even if he was acting like it.

Alex returned a few minutes later carrying a tray with three cups balanced on it. This she placed on the desk and then turned to offer Henry his coffee which he took with a polite "Thank you, Miss Brady."



Lybarger '90

She nodded in response and turned back to the desk. Henry sipped experimentally at his coffee and decided it was all right--which was a relief. Some of this American brew tasted as if it were made from roasted acorns.

He watched with interest as Indiana took the second cup from Miss Brady. His ankles were together like a young girl's--"a nervous virgin's" was the exact phrase that went through Henry's mind--and his hat was protectively shielding his--lap. Miss Brady was smiling at him sweetly, looking something like a cross between a Botticelli portrait and a Borgia, but Junior's return glare was far from inviting, rather jaundiced, in fact. This was certainly going to bear some looking into. He'd have to pump the boy when they got home--not that his son was exactly easy to get information from when he wasn't feeling cooperative. And he was looking incredibly intractable just now.

Finally, Alex settled back in the chair behind her desk and surveyed her two customers. "Well," she said in her best bookdealer's voice, the one that revealed no trace of rancor, "shall we get down to business?"

"I didn't come here just to drink coffee, Miss Brady."

Oh, this was going to be fun, a truly pleasant morning. "A gentleman from New York has contacted me wanting to sell the Carlyle you're interested in."

Indy got right to the point. "How much?"

"I won't have any real notion of that until I've seen the book. He mentioned a figure, but it was very high."

"Pay whatever he asks."

Alex blinked. "But, Dr. Jones, I'm sure I could--"

"I want the book, Miss Brady. As soon as possible."

If you're in such a damned hurry, Alex thought, why don't you go to the library? The woman leaned forward, her elbows resting on the desk. "Would tomorrow be soon enough?"

"If that's the best you can do."

It was definitely a good thing the desk was between them. "I'm going into New York this afternoon," Alex said tightly, "and I'll set up a meeting with Mr. Trautmann. I can get the book then. **That** is the best I can do." And you're going to pay for it! she added to herself.

"All right, Miss Brady. I'll see you tomorrow. Come on, Dad."

Indy had stomped off downstairs before Henry could put his cup on the desk. "Miss Brady, my son **can** behave better than this."

"Dr. Jones, I would have to see it to believe it."

"I suppose you would. Good day."

A matter of opinion, Alex reflected. "Sure," she muttered, not feeling entirely gracious herself.

After she'd gotten rid of the Joneses, Alex picked up her coffee and wandered downstairs to see Laura. She leaned against the edge of the other woman's desk, sighing and shaking her head.

"There's something funny going on," she said finally.

"What do you mean?"

"The Carlyle isn't that rare or valuable. He wants it too fast, and he's willing to pay anything for it. Nobody's **that** eager to spend money these days, not unless they're involved in something screwy." Her head came back, and she peered intently at the ceiling. "What's so special about this book? Why does he want **this** one so much?"

"You're going to find out, aren't you?"

Alex looked back at her assistant. "Of course I am. You know me. I plan on doing just exactly that."

Henry caught up to his son at the corner and fixed him with his most intimidating glare. "Junior, you--"

"Don't start, Dad." Indy glanced both ways and stepped into the street. He wasn't ten-years-old, goddammit, and he wasn't going to let his father's icy look affect him like he was. After all, Henry hadn't been the one with the water in his lap.

"You're putting Miss Brady at quite a risk."

"If she runs into the Nazis, they're the only ones I'd feel sorry for."

"Junior . . ."

"Just watch out for the car, Dad."

Alex's small, red coupe sped west from New York City into the late summer twilight. The woman's hair had been released from its knot by the warm wind, and her blouse was open several buttons down from the neck. The Joneses might not have recognized her at this point, but Laura would have; she was used to her employer's several different personae.

Alex pursed her lips and tapped her right forefinger thoughtfully on the small package wrapped in brown paper on the seat next to her. The Carlyle. It was, as she'd told Laura, not an exceedingly rare or valuable book. Nor had it been in exceptionally good condition, a very commonplace volume indeed. **Herr** Trautmann's price had been far from reasonable, but she'd paid it. She was going to charge Jones enough more that it really didn't make much difference, and, besides, her curiosity had been definitely piqued. Two pages of **On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History** were glued together. Not uncut--she'd checked, of course--but glued together. Interesting, interesting, she reflected. **Very** interesting.

And Alex intended to find out what was between those two pages. Yes, she most certainly did.

Indiana Jones pushed in the open door of the Micawber Bookshop. "Miss Brady?" he called. He was a little surprised at finding the door ajar like that, but figured it wasn't his problem.

Yet, he amended to himself, flattening his body against the door jamb. A clatter of footsteps from the upstairs office had exploded across the shop floor, and burst into the street between Indy and his father.

"Shit!" Indy swore as he turned to follow the stranger. Then he spotted Alex at the foot of the stairs. "He hasn't got the book, has he?"

"N-no," she said unsteadily, leaning against the wall for support. Interesting, she thought. My God! She was wishing very sincerely that she'd remembered the old Chinese proverb a little sooner--"interesting" wasn't always something to be wished for.

"I'm still goin' after him."

And Indy was gone.

Henry quickly went to the woman's side; she was looking a good deal paler than he recalled. "Are you all right, Miss Brady?"

"I-I'm not completely sure."

"You'd best sit down." Henry pulled out the chair from behind Laura's desk. "Here."

Alex sat down gratefully, her knees beginning to feel something like oatmeal.

"Thank you," she managed, pushing back a strand of hair with a shaking hand.

"Where's your assistant? She's not lying hurt somewhere, is she?"

"No, no. She--she doesn't come in today."

"Ah." Henry hesitated a moment, hoping she wasn't the type to faint; he hated fainting females. "Perhaps I could make you some tea? If you'll tell me where the things are . . . ?"

"You'll find everything you need back there." She gestured toward a curtained doorway at the rear of the shop. "That would be nice. Thank you," she added a second time, her voice absently polite. She was much too shaken to say much more--at least not without shocking Dr. Jones. She sat listening to the homey clatter of utensils from the backroom, wondering at what had happened this morning--Oh, definitely not within the usual bookseller's line, friends and neighbors. Most definitely not. Alex was starting to regret where her curiosity had taken her. Or rather, her curiosity and Jones's considerable disregard for her well-being in sending her after that bloody book. Somebody was going to answer some questions. And that right early--like right damn' now.

"Hell," Indy muttered, coming back into the shop, breathing hard. "Lost him."

"What a pity," Alex said sourly. "I'm fine. Thanks for asking."

"Huh?" His eyes lit on her for the first time. No blood anywhere, no open wounds or evidence of gunshots. "Well, you **are** okay, aren't you?"

"Swell. Peachy. I think I'll make a habit of starting all my days like this."

He looked briefly around the shop. "Where's my father?"

"In the back. He's making me some tea."

"Dad's sovereign remedy for everything," Indy said wryly. Then he gave Alex a sudden, sharp glance. She didn't look swell or peachy; she looked damn' scared, but she was clearly going be double-damned before she'd let on. Something like Marion, he thought reminiscently--only Marion wouldn't have let the guy get out of the shop undamaged, probably not even with his balls intact.

Henry came through the curtained doorway. "Here you are, Miss Brady. Very hot and very sweet. It should do you some good."

Alex willingly took the offered cup. "Thanks," she said, with the trace of a smile.

Henry settled himself in a chair opposite Alex. "Can you tell us what happened?"

The woman leaned back in her chair and took a long swallow of the hot tea. "My visitor--whom you scared off when you came in--was asking about the Carlyle. He apparently wanted it even more than you do. He was making some decidedly unpleasant threats as to what he was going to do to me if I didn't give it to him, and-- Well, I won't go into that. I'd just as soon forget it."

"He didn't do anything, did he?" Henry asked, his voice grim.

"No. He didn't have time. I--I guess I'm just not used to people treating me that way."

"Happens to me all the time," Indy said absently. "Where's the book?"

His father and Miss Brady both stared at him incredulously. "Well?" he prompted, wondering what their problem was.

Alex put down her teacup, very slowly and very carefully. "The book," she said acidly, "is in the lower left-hand drawer of my desk. I suppose you want me to get it for you?"

"No, I'll do it."

And he headed off upstairs.

"God, I don't **believe** the man."

Henry shook his head wearily. You wouldn't have thought the boy had had any upbringing at all. "I don't either at times."

Indy was whistling when he came back down, looking very satisfied, tossing the book complacently from one hand to the other. "Found it," he said cheerfully--not precisely an easy thing to do, considering the untidy state of Miss Brady's office. "How much d'you want for it?"

"Not so fast." Each word was clipped off and precise. He wasn't breezing in and out of her life like that, not without some very good answers.

"Hm?" Indy had recognized the pissed-off tone in her voice--after all, he'd heard it before, and from other women than this one--but he sounded completely guileless.

Henry knew the innocent act from long experience. It hadn't worked any better with him when Indiana was fourteen. "I think you owe the woman some kind of explanation, Junior," he said dampingly.

"I mean, this isn't actually a sought-after book." The venom was under several layers of sugar, but it was there all the same. "It's hardly the **Necronomicon** of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred, is it?"

"What?" Henry said blankly.

"Lovecraft, Dad."

"Don't tell me **you** read Lovecraft, Dr. Jones?"

"I've never been too partial too it," Indy explained. "It's too much like work."

"Well, maybe your work," she shot back, "but not mine. I want to know what's going on, and I want to know now. Why is that damned book so important?"

"It really doesn't need to concern you, Miss Brady."

"Doesn't need to concern me?" Alex echoed in disbelief. "Don't you think it already does?"

Indy knew his charm didn't work on her. He was getting ready to try his second weapon--bluster and bullshit--when she interrupted him.

"And I'd really like to know about those two pages that are glued together."

He blinked in surprise. "How'd you know about that?"

"Oh, for pity's sake, Dr. Jones!" How stupid did he think she was? "I looked at the book before I bought it! Of course I'd notice something like that! Don't you think I know my own business?"

"Then maybe you better start minding it and stay the hell out of mine," Indy snapped in the voice that had withered numerous freshmen.

Alex failed to wither. She came to her feet, losing her grip on her rapidly rising temper. "You want to try the tea this time?" she demanded angrily.

Indy's glance flickered to his crotch--there were some things that he understandably considered very valuable--and in that instant Alex grabbed the book from him.

"If you want it, you're going to have to tell me what's happening. That's my price."

"I can take the book, Miss Brady, if I want it." His voice was grimly level, ice-cold; his hazel eyes had gone dark.

"Don't think that's going to be so bloody easy," she said between her teeth. Her voice was just as level and icy. And very, very quiet. "And if you take the book"--and she didn't doubt for a moment that he could in spite of her best efforts, not with that look on his face--"I can call the police."

Henry had been watching the exchange with some enjoyment. Miss Brady was quite a firebrand, it appeared, and more than a match for his son. "I think she has you there, Junior." He chuckled. "Now sit down, both of you, and behave yourselves. You can talk this out calmly."

It said something for Henry that they did just exactly that, Alex at the desk and Indy next to his father.

Alex made herself take a sip of her tea; she'd never felt so nervy in her entire life. Branching out? she thought wryly. New horizons for the bookdealer? She gave the two men a sharp look. "So can one of you tell me what this is all about?"

"Well, Junior?"

Indy was silent for a moment, then with a sigh he crossed his legs and looked out of the front window. "I guess it wouldn't hurt," he finally admitted. And he really didn't see any way out of it, not with the pair of them ganging up on him; and he sure-God didn't need the police in on this. What the hell. It was for the book. "There's an item missing from the National Museum. It was stolen a few weeks ago, and the curator, Marcus Brody, asked me to st-- to get it back."

"I know Mr. Brody. I've done some work for him. A nice man."

"Thanks for the character reference," Indy said sarcastically.

She ignored that. "Who stole it?"

Indy took a breath. "Some Germans."

Her eyes narrowed. "Nazis?"

"Yeah. Grand bunch of guys."

"I don't have an exceedingly high opinion of people who burn books," Alex said sharply. "What was stolen?"

"A relic, the Cross of Coronado. Cortez gave it to him in 1520. I found it for the museum in the first place, and now I'm going to get it back."

"But what does that have to do with--"

"Goering wanted it for his private collection. He had it stolen. The information in the book will tell me the time and place the German agent will pick up the cross. I intend to--intercept it."

"So **that's** it."

"That's it."

"Well"--Alex pulled open a drawer and removed something--"I've got a paper knife. Let's see if you got what you wanted."

He counted to twenty, very slowly. In Greek. "Miss Brady, that is what I've been **trying** to do."

"Then let the woman do her job," his father advised.

Alex opened the book and carefully slid the paper knife between the glued pages. Deep in concentration, she caught her lower lip with her teeth and parted the pages ever so gently. "There," she finally breathed.

A small piece of paper was resting between the two pages. Indy quickly grabbed it and read the information on it. "Tomorrow afternoon at 2:00 in New York." He looked at Henry. "We'll go in tonight and check out the lay of the land, find out where that address is for sure. Come on, Dad."

"Dr. Jones--"

"Junior--"

He was halfway to the door. "What?" he asked irritably. He'd been held up long enough, dammit. "You said the information was your price."

"We can't leave the woman here alone after what's happened. Her assailant might come back any time."

"So?" That wasn't any of his concern.

"I think we ought to take her with us."

Indiana stared at them. "What the hell are we going to do with **her** in the middle of--"

"I'm sure she and I can think of something to do."

No doubt about that! "Oh, hell," he muttered. "I'm not going to take time to argue. Bring her along if you want."

"I suppose nobody cares what I want," Alex said tartly. "Or don't I get a vote?"

Not a woman to talk about rather than to, Henry realized. "Well, Miss Brady, the choice is, of course, up to you. But I think it would be safer for you to come with us."

She grinned suddenly, deciding she wanted to be in on the adventure in spite of her dislike for Jones, Jr. "I very much doubt that, but I believe I **would** like to come."

"Excellent," Henry approved.

Pain-in-the-ass, Indy thought. Probably worse than Willie--though the singer had at least had **some** redeeming qualities. "Okay, whatever. Let's get moving."

"I'll need to get some things at my house," Alex pointed out.

"Then we'll meet you--"

"We can't let her go by herself, Junior."

"All right, all right!" He threw up his hands in total surrender. "We'll drive her. Does that make everybody happy?"

Alex slipped out of the backseat of Indy's battered Ford. "Won't be a minute," she assured the two men as she started up the front walk.

"Swell."

Henry had had enough. "Junior--"

He was glowering off out the windshield. "What?"

"When you were a boy and did that, I called it sulking. I won't tolerate it any more now than I did then. Do you understand me?"

Only too goddamned well! "Look, Dad, I didn't ask the woman along, and I don't want her here. If you decide to play chivalrous, that's okay. But leave me out of it."

"If that's the way you want it. I'm going inside with her now in case the man from the shop turns up again. You can sit out here and sulk."

"Fine with me," Indy said over the car door's slam, clearly of the opinion that his old man was entering his second childhood. "You can always fight him off with your umbrella or a fountain pen."

"It's worked before," Henry said calmly as he turned to go up the walk. He was soon rapping at the screen door. "Miss Brady? May I come in?"

"Sure," a voice floated down the hallway from the back of the house. "You can find a place to sit in the study, I think. You'll probably have to move some books and papers."

"Uh--yes." Lord, he'd finally found somebody who was a worse housekeeper than himself or his son. But he had a spot cleared off in a moment, as he was used to having to do that, and sat down, looking around, examining the books on the walls surrounding him. Something quickly caught his eye. "You're interested in medieval literature, Miss Brady?"

"Uh-huh. I took several courses in it when I was an undergraduate and in graduate school, and my master's degree is in medieval history."

"An unusual field for a woman."

"So is bookdealing, but I haven't let that stop me."

Henry was just settling in more comfortably when a small black-and-gray dog of indeterminate origins appeared in the study door. The dog--looking to be some sort of terrier mix on closer examination--peered at Henry for a moment then barked once.

"How do you do?" Henry inquired politely.

The dog wagged her tail, deciding the stranger was all right, and came over to have her ears rubbed. Henry obliged.

A little while later, Alex came into the room, carrying a small suitcase. "I see Bingen found you. She's usually good at turning up someone to pet her."

"Bingen?" Henry's brows went up; had he found a kindred spirit? "As in Hildegarde of Bingen?"

Alex smiled. "Not a great many people recognize that."

The brows went higher. "I trust you're not surprised that I did."

"The chair of medieval literature at Princeton? Hardly. I remember reading your commentaries on 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' when I was an undergraduate."

"Only a few years ago, I'm sure."

"Come off it, Dr. Jones." The smile broadened into a grin; now she knew where Junior got it from. "Look, I need to take Bingen next door to see if Sarah will take care of her while I'm gone. Will your son kill me if I take five more minutes?"

"I'll see that he doesn't." He got to his feet. "Let me take your bag out to the car."

"Thanks."

Indy watched sourly as Alex crossed the front lawn, a small dog trotting at her heels. "Livestock now," the archaeologist muttered.

"What's that?" Henry asked as he put Alex's bag in the backseat.

"Never mind. How much longer is she going to be?"

"She's just asking the neighbor to look after the dog," Henry told him as he got into the car.

"She's not bringing it along? The dog? A few cats? The parakeet, maybe?"

"There's no need to be sarcastic; why don't you make the best of it? Did you know she has a degree in medieval history?"

"Oh, that changes everything."

Indy was again staring dourly out the window when Alex slipped into the car a few minutes later.

"Everything's taken care of," she said brightly. "Bingen's fine, and I'm ready."

Indy gave her a hard look over the back of the seat.

Alex gazed at him innocently. "What's the matter? Don't you like dogs?"

"Love 'em. I just love 'em."

"He was even named after one," Henry put in helpfully. "Shall we go?"

"Indiana!" Henry yelled up the stairs.

"What is it, Dad?"

"Don't wear the liontamer's outfit. You'll need to look respectable if we're going to check in to a hotel in New York."

"Jesus **Christ**!" Indy hissed as he slammed the door to his bedroom. It wasn't exactly easy to keep his mind on the cross with all these extra, added attractions. It was getting like a damn' circus, for God's sake. "All we need's a frigging calliope," he muttered disgustedly. "Tigers. Goddamn' penguins."

But no way he was going **anywhere** without what his father termed the "liontamer's outfit." He threw in his whip and gun for good measure. As he'd once told Marcus, he was a very . . . cautious guy.

"Liontamer's outfit?" Alex queried, beginning to wonder at what she'd got herself into.

"Perhaps he'll explain it to you someday," Henry told her. "Make yourself comfortable in the living room. I need to get my things together."

Henry disappeared up the stairs, and Alex wandered into the living room on the right, trying to find something to entertain herself. The furnishings were different than she had expected. Paintings--**good** paintings--hung on the walls, and on either side of the fireplace there were shelves of artifacts and curios--obviously the fruits of Indiana's labors. She reached out a finger to touch one and then thought the better of it, certainly not wanting to risk the wrath of Jones if she damaged it. Probably some fertility fetish, anyway. And she most assuredly did not want anything to do with that.

After a moment, she moved over to the piano and picked up a book laying on top, unable to resist that. Edward Young's **Night Thoughts**--a nice enough edition--and with an absolutely exquisite foredge painting. Her lips formed a silent whistle. **Very** nice, she reflected as she carefully fanned the pages, and not at all expected.*

She was still examining the book when Henry entered the room a little while later.

"I thought you'd find that," he said with a smile.

"It's lovely, a very fine piece of work."

"Indiana's always been fascinated with foredge paintings, ever since he first saw one. The boy has very eclectic tastes."

"So I've noticed." She examined the painting again. "It's a view of Oxford, isn't it?"

"Yes," Henry answered, settling into an armchair.

"What about you?"

"Mm?"

"University of Edinburgh?"

"No. Oxford, like the book. Balliol College."

"Really? My father was at Cambridge."

"He was English?"

"No. He just went there to study. He learned the book business besides and met my mother."

"A fruitful sojourn."

"They always thought so. Is your son ready yet, or did he just leave without us?"

Henry chuckled. "He's telephoning a friend of his to ask him to keep an eye on your house and shop in case there's any trouble while we're gone."

"That was thoughtful. Did you tell him to do it?"

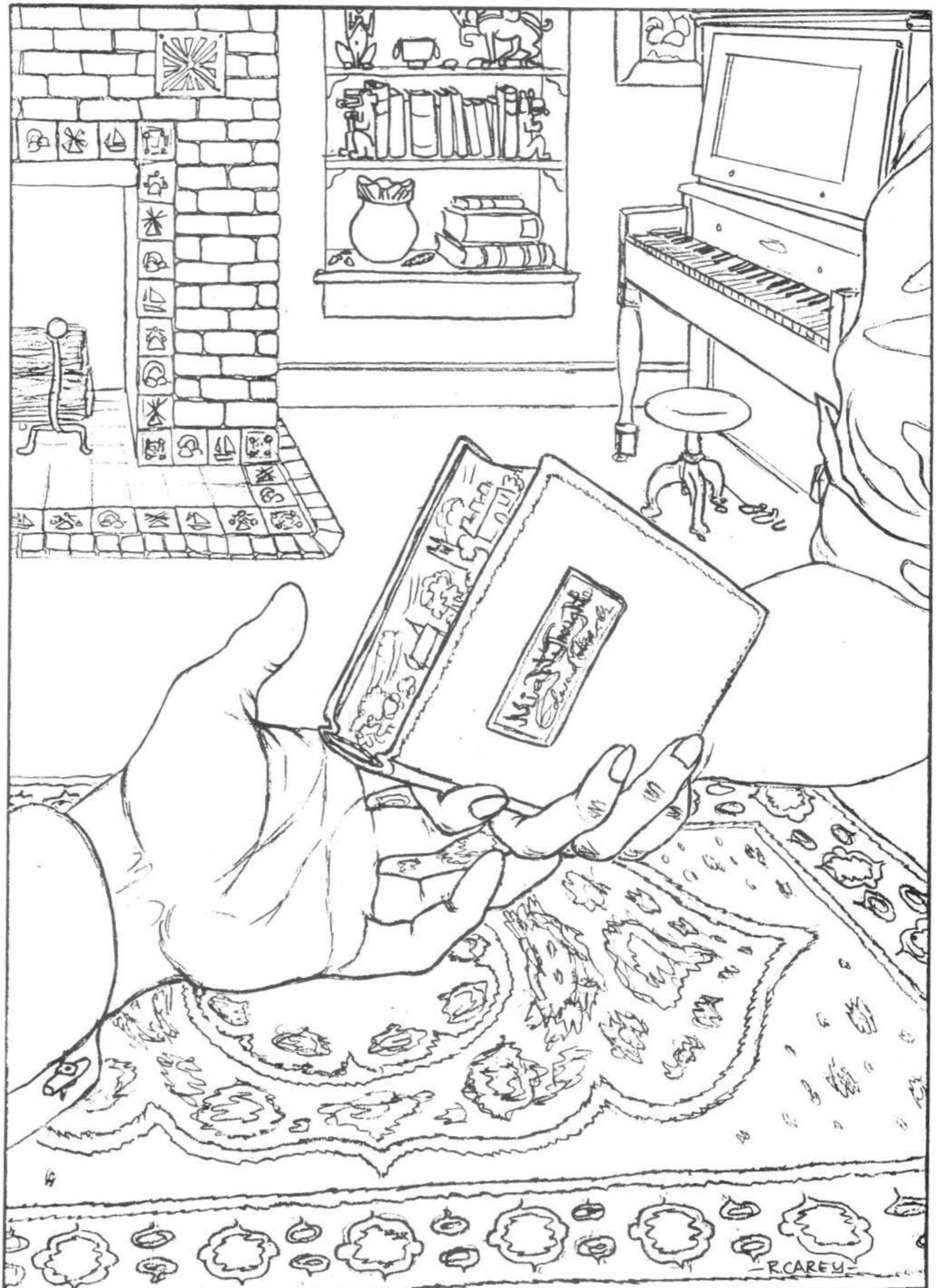
"No, he came up with it all by himself."

"Incredible."

"Okay, everybody." Indy deposited his battered suitcase in the hallway with a thump. "Time to hit the road-- Hey, be careful with that. It's--" He broke off, realizing suddenly that it was more than a bit foolish to warn Alex to be careful with a book.

"I won't hurt it," Alex assured him, not, surprisingly enough, sounding angry. She could appreciate and understand his respect and love for the book. "It's beautiful."

*Such an edition is in the author's collection. It gives her a good deal of pleasure to think that Indiana Jones might have once owned it.


R.CAREY

Indy crossed over to the piano. As he reached out to take the book from Alex, their fingers touched. What marvelous hands, Alex thought in spite of herself. What wonderful hands--large and golden, graceful and controlled, strong yet somehow delicate . . . Indy, meanwhile, was studying the way a loose, auburn curl had brushed the firm, pale line of Alex's jaw. He wouldn't mind traveling along with that curl, he suddenly realized, following the bone with his finger around to her chin, doing a little exploring, some of that field-work he was so justifiably famous for . . .

Across the room, Henry just smiled to himself.

Indy came back to reality in a moment. He laid the book back on top of the piano and turned toward the door. "Let's go. We can't spend the rest of the day admiring books."

Alex sighed resignedly, but Henry only nodded a little, still smiling his secret smile.

Alex stood at the window of her hotel room, arms folded, watching the busy New York traffic on the street below. She'd changed into a light, summer dress she'd brought along, but still longed for the cooler weather of Barnett. The city was sweltering in the early evening heat, and the fan on the dresser wasn't doing much good--damn-all, as a matter of fact. She wondered briefly if the hotel could supply enough ice to fill her bathtub.

There was a sudden knock at her door, and she went over to answer it. She found Indiana Jones standing in the hallway, not seeming especially happy to be there. He still had on the suit he'd worn into the city, but by this time he looked more rumpled than respectable, something like a large, unmade bed.

"Uh--hi," he ventured after a moment.

Alex nodded in response. "Hi."

"Dad and I were going out to dinner. He--we wondered if you'd like to come along."

"I don't know." She turned back to the window. "I thought I'd just try that drugstore on the corner or something."

"You really want that?"

"No, I don't really want that," she said acidly. "But good restaurants aren't too receptive to single women."

Indy was silent for a moment, looking at the woman's stiff back, the way her arms were crossed tightly in front of her. "He must have really hurt you," was all he finally said.

Alex gave him a sharp look over her shoulder. "Who?"

"The one who got you so down on men."

Her breath came in slowly, her head tilting back a little. Was it still so obvious? After all this time? "He--he didn't really hurt me, not like that," she said softly, without knowing why. "We just--drifted apart. It--it was a long time ago."

"A long time ago," Indy said in a low voice.

There was something in that tone . . . Turning again, she studied Indy's face for a moment and could see suddenly that he knew hurt and loneliness as well as she did. There was none of the brash adventurer in his look, nor any of the logical, classroom professor. There was just a softening, a vulnerability, and more than a touch of sadness. Well, what do you know? Alex thought. Mr. God is human.

But the mask was back in place almost the instant he felt her studying him. "Well, d'you want dinner or not?"

She smiled at him, not her business smile, just a friendly smile, dropping some of her own defenses, deciding maybe it was time. "I think that would be nice."

She looks a lot better when she does that, Indy realized. Oughta do it more often. "You like Italian food?"

"Uh-huh." She picked up her purse. "You know a good place?"

"Best in Manhattan."

"Dad's waiting for us in the lobby," Indy explained as they went down the hall.

Alex nodded. "Oh."

"I--uh--suggested he not order any ice water with dinner."

There was a muffled noise from Alex that sounded suspiciously like a poorly stifled giggle. "You had it coming."

"I had a damn' miserable, embarrassing walk home, **that's** what I had."

"Did you ever think how I might have felt, being propositioned like that?" She snorted. "Primitive sexual practices? Love rituals?"

"Hey, it's worked before," Indy told her, unconsciously repeating Henry's earlier words.

"With whom? Some blond with an IQ of ten?"

"No, she was-- Here's the elevator."

Indiana happily twirled a strand of spaghetti bolognese around his fork and popped it into his mouth. It was every bit as good as he remembered. Forget Manhattan. This was the best damn' Italian restaurant in the Western Hemisphere--outside of Italy. Henry, meanwhile, was demolishing a veal cutlet that was turning out much better than he'd expected after seeing it covered with some kind of sauce he couldn't quite identify. Alex was busy with her fettucine alfredo, a little surprised that Indy had discovered such a wonderful place. This was the best meal she'd had in ages--especially since she hadn't had to cook it herself. Of course, she'd put her spaghetti sauce up against anybody's . . .

"Dr. Jones--" she started.

"Yes?" both men answered, looking up from their food.

Alex laughed softly. "Maybe it's time to try first names. I've always preferred Alex to Miss Brady."

"Very well." The elder Jones extended his hand, and Alex took it. "You may call me Henry." He gestured towards his son. "You **could** call him Henry, too, but he prefers Indiana."

Alex laughed again. "I see." She reached across the table toward the man. "Indiana?"

He smiled. "Alex."

Alex's smaller hand was completely swallowed up in Indy's larger, calloused grasp. And they were suddenly looking at each other as if they'd never seen one another before, looking as if they really didn't mind the view, almost as if they were enjoying it, in fact.

Henry smiled, nodded, and went back to his veal. The boy could be slow sometimes, he reflected, but he eventually got round to the proper things. Their sniping was continuing--which didn't surprise Henry, not with two wills as strong as this pair's--but the maliciousness was lessening and sharp flashes of quirky, mordant humor were coming through.

"Why didn't I order in Italian?" Indy demanded of Alex. "Why didn't **you**?"

"Most of my Italian comes from opera, and I didn't think I could get much dinner by singing."

"Oh, I'm sure they would've brought you something if you'd stood on a chair and warbled 'Vissi d'arte.'"*

"What were you going to regale us with? 'Questa o quella'?"*

"No, I thought I'd try 'La donna è mobile.'"*

"I should have known the duke would be one of your heroes."

"Swell guy."

"What about Don Giovanni?"

"I don't like the ending."

"Personally, I think Donna Elvira and Donna Anna should have strangled him."

"And Butterfly should have stabbed Pinkerton instead of herself?"

"Definitely," she responded calmly. "Could I have some more wine?"

The evening hadn't cooled much, and Indiana Jones lay in the darkness, sweating and staring at a ceiling he couldn't quite see, his hands clasped behind his head. He was thinking. A lot. Mostly about somebody he'd never thought he'd want to think about and in a way he'd never thought he'd want to think about her. What the hell was he? Some damn' adolescent to be lying here awake wondering how Alex Brady would look in a--

"Dad?"

"What?" from the next bed.

"Are you asleep?"

"Obviously not. What do you want?"

"I need to ask you something."

"I see. About what?"

"Alex."

"Ah. What about her?"

"Are you--uh--interested in her?"

"She's an intelligent and attractive woman," Henry responded placidly. "Why shouldn't I be interested in her?"

"Uh . . . no reason. I just wondered."

"Don't worry, son." His father chuckled. "I won't get in your way."

Indy quickly propped himself up on an elbow. "What is **that** supposed to mean?"

"You work it out. Good night, Junior."

He flopped back on the pillows. "Yeah."

The three met the next morning at ten in the hotel's small coffee shop. Alex muffled another yawn and rested her elbows on the table, watching the two men devour their enormous breakfasts. How did they do it? She was by no means a morning person under the best of circumstances, and she'd lain awake a long time last night, reading and thinking. Mostly thinking. And wondering about--certain things. Many things. And maybe about how she shouldn't have

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*"I have lived for art"--a soprano aria sung by the famous actress and singer Floria Tosca in Puccini's opera **Tosca**.

*Literally "This one or that one"--a tenor aria by the Duke of Mantua in Verdi's **Rigoletto** meaning basically that any woman will do--a sort of Italian "All cats are gray in the dark."

*Another aria by the duke indicating his belief that women are changeable "like a feather in the wind."

been so quick with a certain pitcher of water.

She yawned again and took a sip of her coffee. "Indy?"

"What?" he said around a mouthful of ham.

"I want to make sure I've got things straight. Trautmann said the cross would be delivered to the address we checked out yesterday sometime around noon, right?"

"Uh-huh."

"And the German agent is picking it up at 2:00?"

"Right. Pass the jam, would you? Are you sure you don't want something? This is really good."

"My idea of a heavy breakfast is to have orange juice with the coffee. But I'll make up for it at lunch."

"We're not going to have time for lunch."

"Then I'll have the orange juice."

Indy summoned the waitress, and the juice was duly brought. Alex sipped at it experimentally and decided it was all right. "What time are we leaving?" she asked in a moment.

"We?" both of the men said at once.

"Of course. I'm coming with you."

Indy dabbed at the corner of his mouth with his napkin and looked at Alex seriously. "I don't know, Alex. It might get a little--difficult."

Henry rolled his eyes; things his son had written off as "a little difficult" could chill the blood. "I'm not sure it would be a good idea," he said, reaching for a piece of toast.

Alex regarded them for a moment, and frigid, Indy thought, would be much too warm a word to describe the look in her eyes. She could give Dad lessons, for Chrissake.

"I see," she was saying tightly. "I'm just supposed to wait here like a good little girl, is that it?"

"Come on, Alex," the archaeologist said. "Be sensible."

"I don't want to be sensible. I wouldn't be here at all if I were sensible--no more that **you** would if **you** were sensible." She sighed exasperatedly; somehow she hadn't figured this would be a hard thing to explain to Indiana Jones. "Look, the most dangerous thing I've ever done is walk home from the movies alone. I want a little excitement; is there anything wrong with that?"

"No," Indy had to admit. He understood it perfectly. "But--"

She went right on. "And I want to help. I don't like the idea of the Nazis getting their hands on that relic any better than you do. I want to do what I can to stop them."

She met Indy's eyes steadily and held his gaze. "All right," he said, after a moment, respecting what he'd seen and heard from the woman. "You're in if you want to be."

"I'm not sure--" Henry started.

Alex shifted her eyes to the older man. "He'll have two of us to guard his back," she said evenly. "I think that's better than one."

Henry couldn't argue with that. He began to butter his toast. "I quite agree."

A few minutes before noon, the three sat in Indy's car across the street from a very commonplace brownstone. Alex, dressed in a plaid shirt with the sleeves rolled up and a pair of light tan slacks, had her feet up on the backseat and was fanning herself limply with a section of the **New York Times**, hoping she wouldn't melt. Indy had long since removed his coat and tie was busy wishing for a **very** large and **very** cold gin-and-tonic. Even Henry had loosened his tie and was giving strong consideration to joining his son in his shirtsleeves. American summers, he thought ruefully. Not for the first time.

"There!" Alex said suddenly, leaning forward and pointing across the street. "I bet that's him."

Indy nodded slowly as he watched the nondescript man with a package under his arm turn and mount the steps to the brownstone. "We wait for him to come out, and then we go in. It'd be safer if we were gone by the time the German agent shows up."

"Don't you want a chance to punch him in the face?" Alex asked, voicing Henry's sentiments as well.

"Well, if we **do** happen to run into him, I wouldn't object." Indy flexed his right hand, suddenly looking very feral. "I wouldn't object at all."

It was about fifteen minutes later when the man came out of the building--minus the package--and disappeared off up the street.

"All right." Indy shifted a little in the seat, removing his pistol from his discarded coat. "I guess we're ready. Dad?"

Henry nodded and pulled an equally lethal-looking revolver from his pocket. "Ready."

"Where did you get **that**?" Indy demanded. He somehow had never quite expected to see his father carrying a gun, though the old man was always coming up with surprises.

"I borrowed it from one of our German friends last spring," Henry told him calmly. "I thought it might come in handy."

"It might at that." He turned to took at Alex. "What've you got in your purse? A Tommy gun?"

"Not exactly."

"Not exactly?" His voice held a certain hollow note that one would hear from him more and more around Alex Brady.

"Just this." She innocently brought forth a small pearl-handled revolver. "A girl never knows when she might need something like this."

"Did you have that in your office the day I--"

"Uh-huh."

"And you know how to use it?"

She nodded. "Mm-hmm."

"Oboy."

Henry grinned over at his son. "Didn't I ever tell you to make sure the woman wasn't armed?"

"I must've missed that lesson," he muttered as he slipped out of the car.

"Hi," Indy said politely to the milk-toast of a man in the door of the third-floor apartment their information had led them to. "I'm working my way through college selling subscriptions to the **Völkischer Beobachter**, and I was wondering if you'd be interested."

The man--Alex privately thought he looked a little like Heinrich Himmler with those steel-rimmed spectacles--started to back away. "I don't think I--"

"Yes, you **do**."

Indy pushed him through the door and shoved him up against the wall. Nazis were bad enough, Christ knew, but he had even more contempt for an American who'd work for them. Like Donovan. "Dad."

"Taken care of," Henry said in a businesslike manner as he closed the door.

Indy kept his left forearm tight across the little man's throat. If that chill gleam in his eye had been there earlier, this went much deeper. His voice was deadly quiet and calm, a killer's voice, a voice Alex had heard only a hint of when she'd grabbed the book from him. "I think you have something I'm interested in." The words were audible, but only just.

"I don't know what you mean." He was far from steady, clearly forcing the response from a very dry mouth.

Indy pulled the gun from his pocket, in no mood for the social amenities. "Maybe you better find out."

"But they'll kill me if--"

"What do you think I'll do?" Indy demanded coldly.

The other closed his eyes, trembling, and licked his lips. "It--it's in the living room."

Indy gave him a shove down the hall. "Show me."

Released from the crushing grip on his throat, the man slumped against the wall for a moment, gasping. Then he moved unsteadily down the short hall in front of Indy, Henry and Alex following. They entered a small room to the right, and Indy watched carefully as the collaborator moved toward an antique table in the middle of the room. A cloth-wrapped object lay on the table.

Indy took a quick step forward, shoving the gun into the waistband of his trousers. "Dad, you and Alex keep an eye on him."

"Of course," Henry said calmly, reaching for his own gun. "I rather hope he tries something."

The archaeologist carefully unwrapped the package on the table and held up the cross. A grim smile crossed his face. "Goering isn't getting this now, not while I'm here to stop him."

Murphy's Law had not been expounded yet. But, had it been, the archaeologist, the bookseller, and the medievalist all had an excellent opportunity to watch it in action. As a matter of fact, Indy had seen it happen far too many times before. Or, as his great-aunt had been wont to say: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." He'd always considered her a major pain-in-the-ass--one of her other favorite expressions had been a knowing "It'll all end in tears"--but when she was right, she was right.

Like now.

The front door crashed in, and Indy cursed bitterly as he shoved Alex toward the open window and the fire escape beyond. "Get the hell out!" he barked. "Find help!"

She nodded quickly and scrambled through the window. This was no time to argue even if she'd been in the mood. And somehow debate did not seem very wise at the moment.

Indy spun back towards the living room door, but found it filled by two very large men with very large guns and no mercy in their eyes. He hoped Alex could run fast.

An impeccably dressed gentleman stepped between the two goons, his white linen suit looking as if it wouldn't dare wrinkle. He smiled and removed his hat. "Both members of the esteemed Jones family," he purred in an accented voice. "I would suggest you drop your guns. Shooting you here would be so messy."

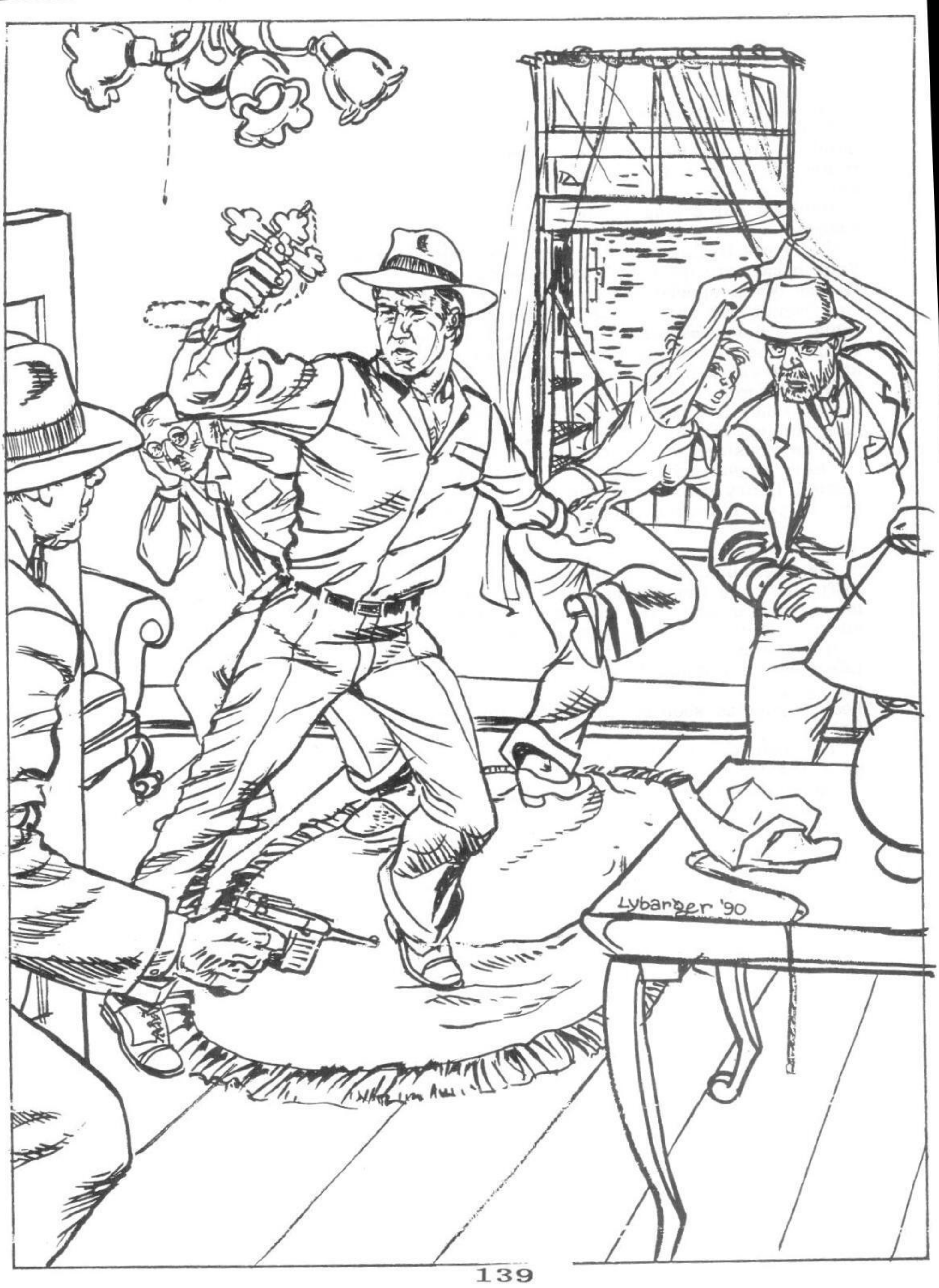
Henry reluctantly did as he'd been told, and Indy followed suit.

"There was a woman with them," the American Nazi said quickly. "She went down the fire escape."

"Check on that, would you?" The agent gestured to one of his gorillas who obediently crossed over to the window.

"There's no sign of her," he reported. "But she may have gone for the police."

"Then we must be gone before help can arrive."


Lybarger '90

"How did you know?" Indy asked in a tight, angry voice.

"Do not take me for a fool, Dr. Jones. Of course I was having the building watched in case you made such an attempt. **Herr** Trautmann told me everything. He is now very dead, unfortunately, as you and your father soon will be."

Indy let out a long breath. "Yeah," he muttered. Not with a bang but a whimper . . .

"My name is Engelbrecht. Perhaps you will remember it for a short while. **Your** names are quite well remembered in Germany, especially by the **Führer**. He has given special orders that your deaths be neither quick nor easy. My two friends will see to that." Smiling gently, he picked up the cross from the table. "**Reichsmarschall** Goering will be very pleased with this, as will the **Führer** when I tell him of your untimely passing. I wish I had the leisure to stay and enjoy it, but I must be on the 7:00 flight to Berlin. **Guten tag, meinen Herren**."

The taller of the two goons smiled at them unpleasantly as Engelbrecht left. "He said to take you some place quiet so we could work with you very slowly."

"How considerate," Henry murmured.

"**Herr** Engelbrecht is a very fine German and a gentleman," the gunman said, though Henry considered the two terms mutually exclusive. "I wonder which one of you I should shoot first. And where."

Alex remained in the alley that ran to one side of the building. A little difficult? she thought as she fingered her revolver. Was he **kidding**? She let out her breath with an audible "whoosh." "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and all the saints! I really dropped myself in it this time!"

But it was to be only the first of many times, as she was soon to discover. Life was never going to be quite the same for Alex Brady after this. And she was going to be very grateful to Indiana Jones and his father for the upheaval--just as soon as she pulled their rather charming chestnuts out of the fire.

The main problem was that she didn't have even the faintest idea of how to go about it.

One thing about desperation, she thought, was that it, like the prospect of hanging, concentrated your mind wonderfully. Unfortunately, right now she seemed to be concentrating primarily on nothing particularly helpful.

She quickly flattened herself against the wall when she heard the front door open. From the shadows, she watched as the German agent came down the steps and turned--thankfully--in the opposite direction. Alex wasn't sure he had the cross, though, nor was she completely certain of her ability to face him alone. She probably should have gone for the police, but she hadn't seen any around and didn't have time to knock on doors searching for a telephone.

Upstairs, Alex, she told herself grimly. The lady fair is going to rescue Lancelot and Galahad.

"Now where shall I shoot you first?" The taller German smiled nastily and shoved his gun into Indy's belly while his companion shifted his gaze from Henry to enjoy the confrontation. "In your knee?" The gun moved. "Or perhaps in your--"

"Don't even think about it, you book-burning son-of-a-bitch."

Alex stood in the doorway, her pistol leveled at the Nazi toying with Indy. The gun looked very deadly, and she looked as if she had every intention of *using it. Indy could* have kissed her and made a firm note to do just that when he had the time to attend to it properly. For now, he took advantage of the German's distraction to bring his knee up into the man's crotch as hard as he could. "How about my knee in **your** balls, **mein Herr**?" he grated.

Henry didn't miss his chance, either. He drove his fist into his captor's stomach, a blow with all of his strength behind it, and then broke a convenient--and extremely ugly, in his opinion--Louis XV chair over his back. By the time the Joneses had turned to deal with the American, they found he had already been taken care of and was lying sprawled in the doorway.

"He fell," Alex said evenly, pulling her foot back as if she hadn't just tripped the man. "Ooops. No, you don't." For seeing he was trying to rise, she cracked him soundly over the head with a handy vase.

Indy grinned at her wolfishly, relishing her spunk, remembering her standing in the door like some kind of avenging angel. "At least you didn't break it over my head."

"Maybe later," she told him, matching his grin.

None of them had any compunction about leaving the two Germans tied up at the apartment along with their American friend. Indy, it seemed, had been a very good Boy Scout and knew some excellent knots, ones that would keep the two Nazis and their would-be ally busy for hours, possibly days.

Now, a little later in the afternoon, Alex stood in front of the mirror in her hotel room, carefully repinning a last lock of hair misplaced by her earlier--heroics? Yes, she thought cheerfully, that was the word exactly. And they probably wouldn't be ending here, as she and the Joneses were going to leave for the airport in a few more minutes. Difficult, huh? And way beyond interesting.

She turned at the sound of a knock and crossed over to open the door. "Jesus Christ," she said concisely when she saw Indy there. For he was indeed in his liontamer's outfit, his whip and gun at his waist.

Grinning, he pushed his fedora back on his head. "You better not let Dad hear you say that."

"What's he going to do? Hit me?"

"He might." The grin took on a wry twist. "He says there are worse things you can do to a woman."

"He may be right." She surveyed him for a moment, briefly touching the lapel of his jacket. "So how did you come by this--ensemble?"

"My villain-chasing gear, you mean? It's kind of a long story. Maybe I'll tell you someday."

"Your father said you might."

"Did he?"

They were standing very close together in the doorway. Alex could smell the masculine scent of him, faint traces of dust and sweat and soap and--Indiana. He ran a finger down her jawline, just as he'd thought of doing only yesterday. It pleasured him, and he smiled. So did Alex.

"Are you going to do it?" she whispered.

"If you want me to."

"I do."

"Good."

And their lips met. Indy was practiced; Alex wasn't, but she had a definite degree of natural talent. She responded, slipping her arms around his waist and moving closer. After a few wonderful moments, they parted. Alex let out a slow breath and leaned her head on his shoulder.

"You're very good at that, Dr. Jones," she murmured happily.

He was ready with a smart-ass response--"So I've been told"--but thought the better of it and only said, "Thanks." He stroked her hair, inadvertently loosening pins, but Alex obviously didn't mind. "And thanks for coming back for Dad and me."

"Least I could do for the guys who bought me dinner last night. Good fettucine is hard to find."

Indy touched her lower lip with his thumb. "You could've gone for help, like I said, found a cop or something."

"And maybe have gotten back too late."

"Maybe." He didn't like to think about that, so he kissed Alex again.

"It would have been **such** a waste," she told him in a moment.

"Were you scared?"

"As hell."

"Me, too." He chuckled softly. "C'm'here."

Alex hadn't felt this way since she'd been nineteen. She was enjoying it every bit as much now as she had then, if not more. The kiss deepened; they sank into it with happy abandon--until they were interrupted by an acerbic "Ahem." They looked up, startled, to find Henry Jones, Sr. surveying them.

About damned time, Henry thought. Aloud, he said, "Can't you find any better place to do that than a public hallway?"

"There wasn't anybody around," Indy told him easily, and Alex giggled.

"Not," said his father, "that you would have noticed."

"Probably not," Alex answered. And giggled again.

She looked quite like a schoolgirl when she did that, Henry realized, thinking of a time when he'd found his son and a young girl involved in a similar activity on the porch steps. His reactions then had not been nearly so subdued.

"If you'll recall," he said briskly, "**Herr** Engelbrecht still has the cross and is no doubt headed for the airport. Shouldn't we be on our way?"

"Dad, you and the Nazis have some of the worst timing on the planet." He bent and gave Alex a brief kiss. "Remember where we left off."

"No problem."

They made an oddly assorted trio crossing the lobby, Indy with his arm around Alex's shoulders and Henry in the lead. But no one made any comment. It was, after all, New York City.

Alex knew what they were going into was very risky, certainly far from safe and probably even dangerous. But, somehow, she didn't care. Somehow, she was thriving on it, the thrill going through her like a straight shot of good whisky, bang out to her fingertips and right down to her toes. And having Indy's arm around her didn't hurt anything, it most certainly did not.

She looked up at him, grinning wickedly. "There's a kick to it, isn't there?"

He gave her a quick hug. "You bet there is."

Engelbrecht was seated comfortably in the waiting room of the airline terminal, deeply absorbed in one of the city's evening newspapers. He was more than a little shocked when he heard a familiar voice say softly,

"**Mein Herr**, I think you've got something that doesn't belong to you."

The paper lowered, and Engelbrecht stared up at the three Americans in total disbelief. "**Verdammt**!" he gasped. "You are supposed to be dead!"

"Sorry to disappoint you," Indy told him dryly. He pushed his jacket aside, his hand brushing the butt of his gun. "Now I want you to stand up--very, very slowly--and keep your hands where I can see them."

Engelbrecht did as he was told, laying the paper down. He swallowed hard. "Dr. Jones, I--"

"You what?"

The German thought the better of continuing when he saw the look on Indy's face. "Nothing."

"Good. Do you have the cross with you?"

The other remained silent and looked away.

Indy's lips tightened grimly. "I think you better tell me."

"You will not shoot me."

"Do you really want to bet your life on that?"

Engelbrecht stared into the cold, hard eyes and decided he didn't. "It--it's in my coat pocket."

"Good. I want you to hand it to Alex, nice and easy."

He seemed compliant enough as he reached into his pocket for the cross and started to give it to Alex. Then, suddenly, he dropped the relic and grabbed Alex's wrist. More quickly than any of the Americans could have credited, he pulled the woman to him, his left arm holding her tightly around the waist.

"Now, Dr. Jones, you will pick up the cross and put it in my valise. If you do not"--a small pistol appeared in his right hand and was jammed into Alex's neck--"the woman will die."

"God," Indy whispered, feeling desperation grow inside him as he saw the stark fear in Alex's eyes. Jesus, it was just like with Elsa--only this time the German didn't have a fellow Nazi in his grasp, and Alex could well die if they didn't do as Engelbrecht wanted. The gun was petite, scarcely dangerous at a distance, as lethal as any at close range. "Engelbrecht, you--"

It was Henry's turn to move then. Indy caught a flicker out of the corner of his eye, and before he could finish his threat to the German, his father was already behind the Nazi, apparently pushing his gun into the small of his back.

"Let the woman go," Henry said steadily. "**Now**."

"Dr. Jones, you are bluffing."

"Keep believing that and you'll go home to Berlin in a box. **Let the woman go**."

There was steel in his voice; Engelbrecht was learning the hard way not to trifle with the Jones boys or their allies. The gun pressed harder into his spine, and Indy's eyes were glinting ominously. At that point in time, the two men seemed vastly more dangerous than his distant **Führer**. Cursing, he dropped the gun and released Alex--who wisely ducked as Indy's fist flashed past to connect with the German's jaw. Engelbrecht sat down on the floor. Hard. Henry snatched up the cross, and Indy took Alex in his arms, the pain of his hand forgotten in the sudden realization of just how much he wanted her alive.

"Oh, Alex," he breathed in relief. "**Damn**. Are you all right?"

She nodded, her head pressed into his shoulder. "I--I think so. I'll let you know for sure when my heart starts beating again. Just--just hold me, okay?"

Indy didn't have to be asked twice. He held her tightly, feeling her trembling, and stroked her hair comfortingly. "It's all right, Alex," he murmured. "It'll all be fine."

She liked the feel of his arms around her very much and the comfort they offered, but her response was still a weak chuckle and a very blunt profanity.

Indy laughed softly. "Where'd you ever learn language like that? You're gonna shock Dad."

"When I was an undergraduate. Sorry. I'm still not exactly used to this kind of thing."

Henry had been keeping a stern eye on the groggy and fallen German, but now he looked up with a smile. "You may have to become accustomed to it. It seems to happen a great deal around my son. But one can learn to cope." And he raised his hand and calmly blew across the smoking barrel of his forefinger.

Indy stared. "You didn't even have a **gun**?" he demanded in disbelief.

"I thought it safer not to use one with all these people about. Speaking of which, I see a policeman coming. May I suggest a strategic retreat?"

"You got it." Indy took one last look at Engelbrecht. "You ought to have fun explaining this to your boss."

The German didn't even want to think about that. Maybe he would consider emigrating . . .

After a celebratory room service dinner and drinks in Henry and Indy's room, Alex had retired down the hall--"For some rest," she'd said as she left.

Indy had paced around the room a little, whistling absently, jingling things in his pockets. Finally, "I think I'll go check on Alex, make sure she's all right."

Henry arched an eyebrow. "Oh?"

"Don't wait up for me. We may talk for a while or something."

And he was gone.

"I'd wager on the something," Henry complacently told his whisky.

When Alex opened the door, Indy thought she seemed pleased to see him. She had her hair in a braid down her back and was wearing the slacks and shirt she'd had on earlier.

"I came to see if you were okay," he said, a little lamely.

She smiled. "Fine."

"You don't need anything?"

"Well, you **did** say to remember where we'd left off."

"I did, didn't I?" Grinning, glad of her reception, he stepped into the room and closed the door behind him. "Think we can find our place?"

"Oh, definitely." She came happily into his arms and sank into his kiss. After a moment, she pulled back and whispered huskily, "You'll stay?"

"Uh-huh," he murmured, his lips still very close to hers.

"What--what about your father?" Alex's voice was a little unsteady now as Indy was starting to unbutton her blouse.

"Let him get his own girl."

"He won't interrupt us again?" She had decided to help him with his shirt as well, returning the favor.

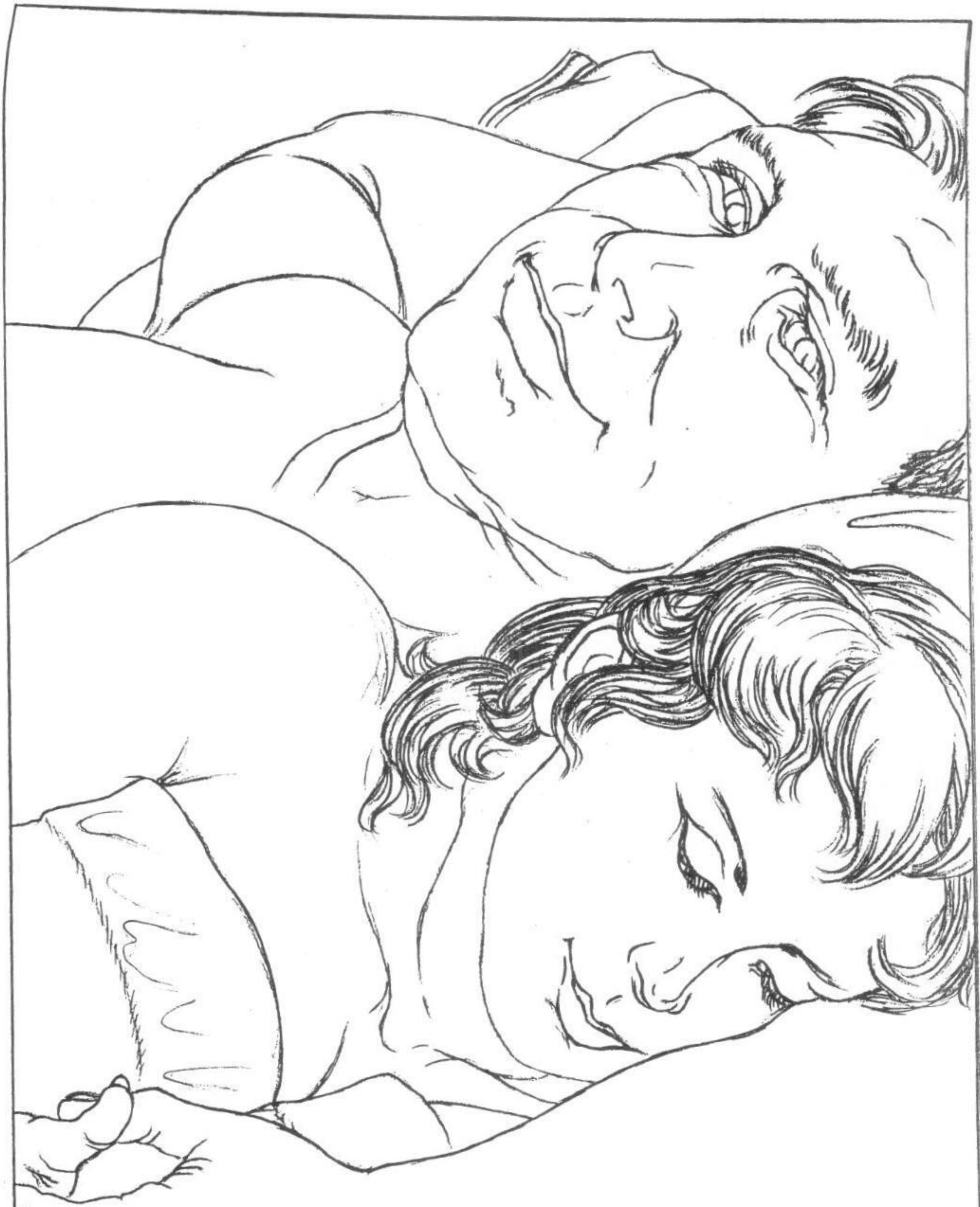
"Nah. I figure we're safe until breakfast."

"You mean we have all night?" She couldn't resist the temptation to trace a finger along his collarbone, easily as wonderful as his hands.

"We have all night. But don't plan on much rest."

Her lips replaced her finger. "I wasn't . . ."

Sometime later, Alex lay curled within the circle of Indy's arm, nestled close to him. She felt better than she had for a long, long time.


-R.CAREY-

"Indy?"

"Yeah?"

"There's something I'd like to tell you."

"What's that?"

"I'm starting to really--care for you, I guess." It wasn't exactly easy to say, but she was glad she had. "I--I haven't done that in-- Well, like I told you, it was a long time ago."

"Does that mean you won't pour water on me again?"

"Definitely."

He smiled over at her, his teeth flashing white in the darkness. "Well, I think you're pretty nice to have around yourself."

"You mean you--"

His kiss was answer enough.

"We sure wasted a lot of time," she was finally able to breathe, feeling a bit light-headed.

"So now we can play a little catch-up."

"Will you teach me about those primitive sexual practices and love rituals?"

"Oh, you wanna learn about **those**?"

She bit his lower lip. "You bet'cha."

Morning light was creeping through the window when Indy slowly drifted awake and smiled over at the woman sleeping next to him. She was curled up, her back to his side, head resting on his arm.

"Alex?"

She stirred slightly, relishing the sound of his soft, gravelly voice. It reminded her of honey and whisky and sunshine. "Mm?"

"How d'you feel this morning?"

Alex stretched a little, languorously. She wasn't used to sharing a bed with anyone, but last night had been a wonderful exception. "I feel **grand**. How about you?"

"The earth moved. The angels wept. In other words, I am very well satisfied, Miss Brady."

"I'm a little out of practice."

"You couldn't prove it by me."

"You know . . ." Alex reached out and twined her fingers through his. "I think it was your hands that did it."

"Huh?"

"When you took the **Night Thoughts** from me, I really noticed your hands for the first time. I--I thought they were wonderful."

"You still think so?"

"Oh, yes! Besides, you know what my friend Becky says it means when a man has big hands and big feet."

He grinned. "What?"

"Big gloves," she said, very seriously. "And big shoes."

Indy promptly swatted her with a pillow. He was getting ready for further measures--"I'll show you big hands," he growled--when a sharp rap sounded at the door. "Jeeze, it's probably the house detective."

But no. "Are you two going to stop long enough to have some breakfast?" Henry Jones demanded through the door.

"You hungry, Alex?"

"Uh-huh." She nodded. "But not for breakfast."

He laughed. "Sorry, Dad. Try us for lunch. And leave the 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door, will you?"

"Jones family stamina," Henry said as he turned toward the elevator. "Truly an amazing thing."

Henry leaned back in his chair and glanced at his watch. Quarter past one. Sighing, he looked over at Marcus Brody. "They should be down soon."

Marcus nodded, looking a little bewildered. But then, Marcus always **did** look a little bewildered. He and Henry were waiting for Alex and Indy in the hotel bar; the couple had said they'd be there fifteen minutes ago, but there was still no sign of them. Henry wasn't especially surprised.

"Would you like another whisky, Marcus?"

"Yes, that would be nice."

The elder Jones had just raised a hand to signal the barman when he spotted his son and Alex in the doorway.

"Ah, here they are."

Marcus was staring. "I haven't seen that expression on Indiana's face since he was an undergraduate."

"I believe 'sappy' is the term you're groping for."

He watched in disbelief as Alex stood on tiptoe to plant a kiss on Indy's cheek. "And I never thought that Miss Brady could--ah--loosen up so much."

"I think Indiana was surprised as well."

"What on earth do they have in common?"

"Foredge paintings."

"What?"

"Books, Marcus."

By that time, Alex and Indy were at the table. "Hullo, Marcus, Dad." Grinning, he reached into the pocket of his suit jacket--while keeping one arm around Alex--and put the cross on the table. "The museum has it back."

Marcus' eyes widened with pleasure. "I don't know how to thank you."

"Oh, we'll think of something."

"Are you joining us for lunch?" Henry asked.

"No, we thought we'd--"

"For God's sake, boy!" Henry exclaimed involuntarily. "Don't push it!"

Alex laughed aloud. "He's told me there's a romantic little hot dog stand just down the street. I asked him for the Plaza, but he said Marcus would take us some place really expensive for dinner so I should save up."

"Uh--yes," Marcus murmured.

"You know," Indy prompted. "Dinner? Champagne? The good stuff?"

"Of course, of course. It's the least I can do."

"We'll see you around seven, then. C'mon, Alex."

"Indy," Alex said as they crossed the lobby, "why do I have the feeling your father knew what was going to happen all the time?"

He chuckled ruefully. "Hell, he probably did."

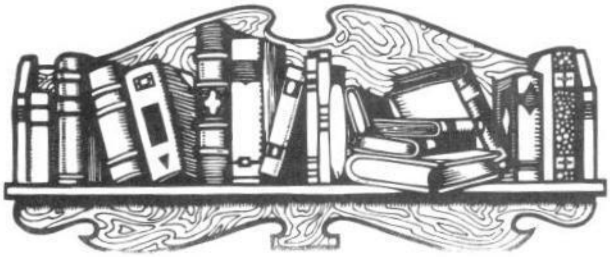
"Know something?" she asked as they stepped out into the afternoon sunlight.

"What?"

"I'm glad he was right."

"So am I." He hugged her to him. **"So am I."**

9 April, 1991



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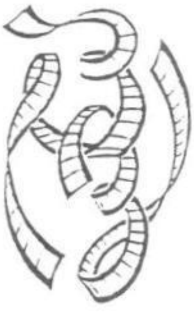

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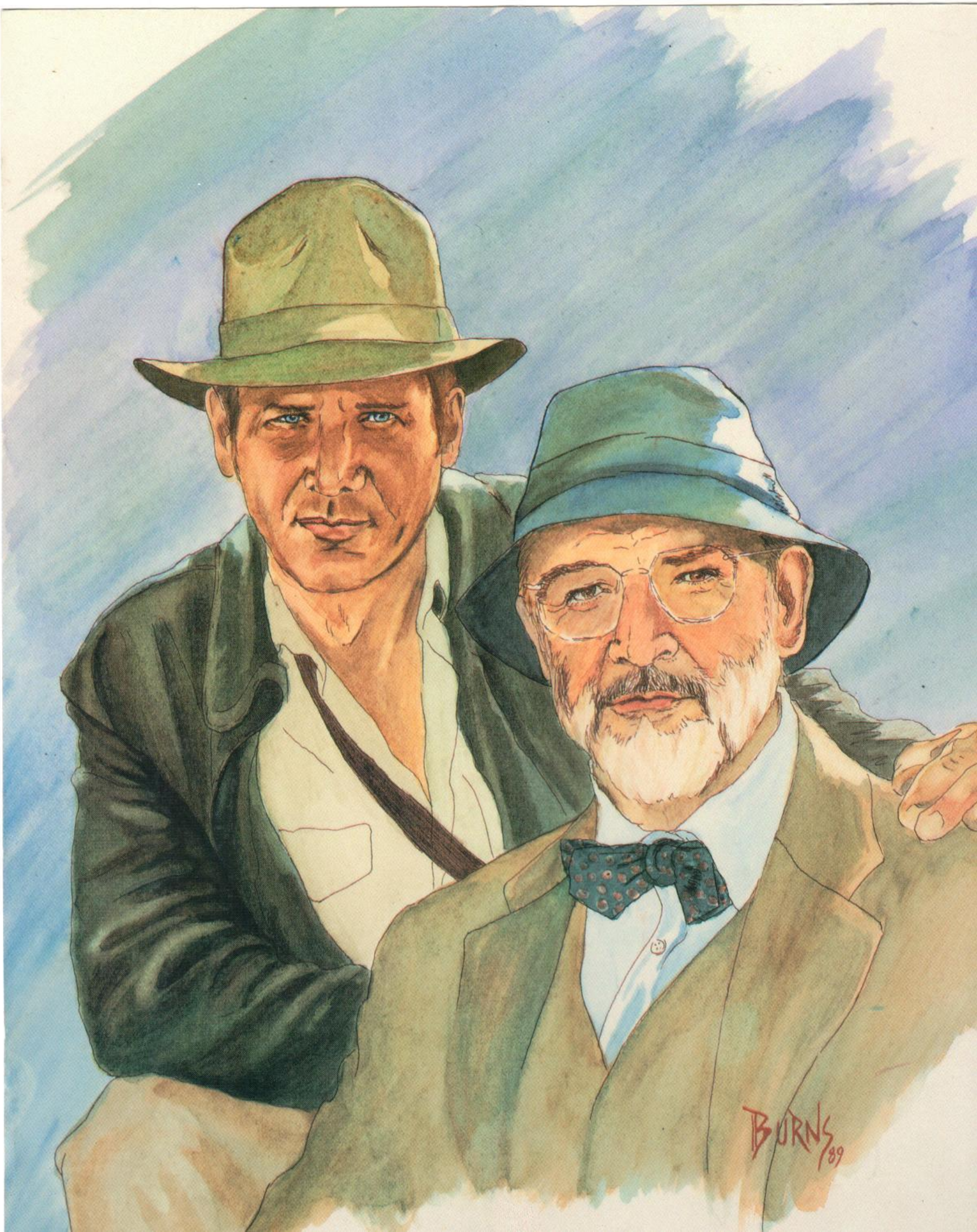
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